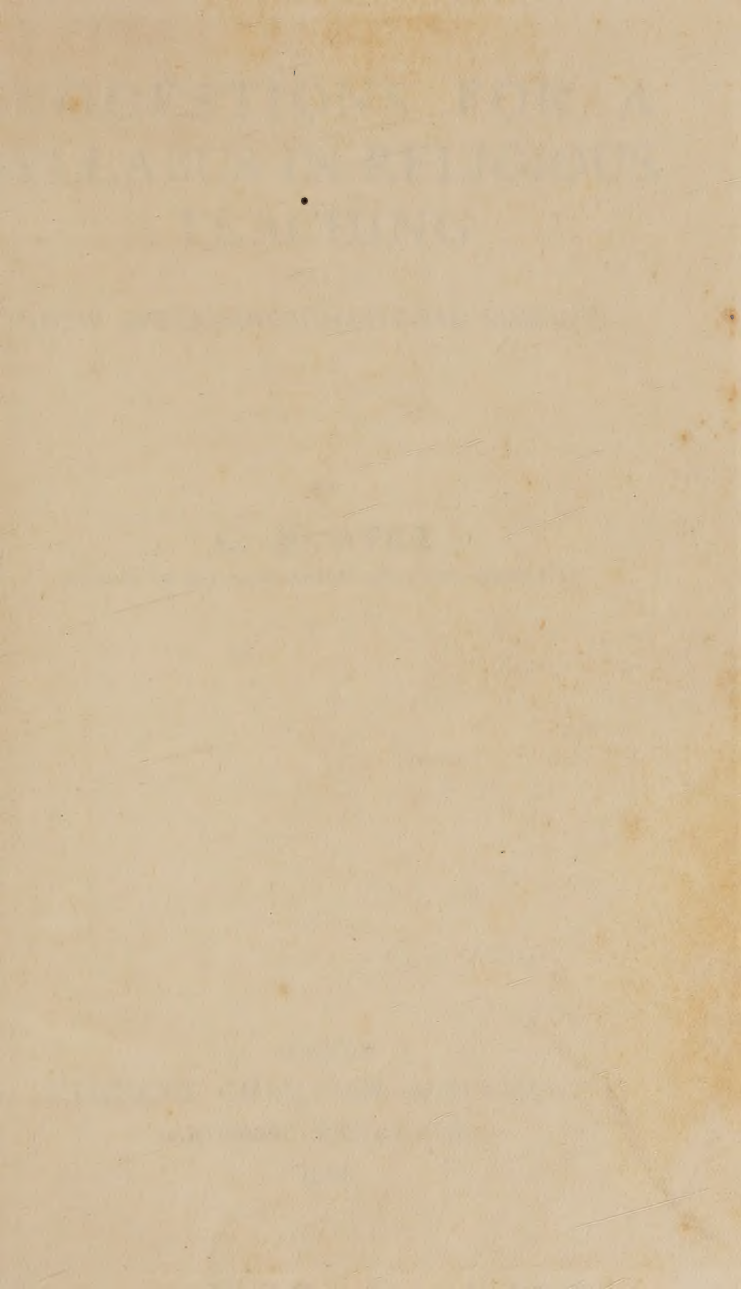





S. H. Clough.

Easter 1924.

St. George's School.
Krossby.





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SUGGESTIONS FOR A SYLLABUS IN RELIGIOUS TEACHING

(NEW INTERDENOMINATIONAL EDITION)

BY

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PREFACE

TWO-THIRDS of this book is new matter; it would have been all the better for three more months' work, but as the book has been out of print for two years, and there is a continuous demand for it, I have been urged to let it be published as it is.

The scheme is the same as that in the first edition; I owe it to "Pastors and Teachers," a pioneer work on religious education.

A new sense of the importance of religious teaching is passing through the country, coupled with an increased sense of responsibility in those who give it. The news of the King and the Kingdom has to be given to each generation afresh; it is through human lips that the child must learn the knowledge of God. The lines on which to work are now known: we realize that each stage of a child's development has different characteristics, and that each stage calls for emphasis on some special part of the whole body of truth. It is important that we adopt the right order, and especially that the children should not be asked to give expression to what cannot yet be part of themselves. We are still apt in the case of children of nine or ten, in the teaching, in prayers, and in hymns, to appeal to religious experience and emotions which normally belong to adolescence, with the result that the spiritual growth of the child is prematurely forced, and fails to come to perfection. There is still much need for research, and every teacher should be able to add to the store of experience.

In this scheme the O.T. stories are introduced early. Many feel that these are not suitable for young children, and should be postponed until the later stages of religious teaching. It is true there is a real danger that through

them the children will get a distorted idea of God, and in the past there has been far too much association of religion with ideas of punishment and fear, but we can guard against this by taking great care as to where we lay the emphasis of the story, and sometimes by omitting certain parts, until the children are old enough to compare these early conceptions of God with those revealed by Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, many of us know that the children will lose much by not hearing these old stories: nowhere is abstract truth put more clearly in concrete form than in the O.T. Its heroes had a unique consciousness of God; they knew He spoke to them; they saw Him in everything; the thunder was His voice, the winds were His messengers; so from these stories our children may be helped to recapture that sense of God which is so largely lacking in the present generation. Also the children love these stories when they are well told. There is evidence that association of religious lessons with boredom and repression has led in later years to a bias against religion. If we do not make the Scripture lesson interesting we may fail more badly than we know.

Some important teaching is left out of the scheme, but it must be remembered that the children are not normally "unattached Christians," and will receive further instruction which should be co-ordinated with this.

The methods of teaching must naturally be the same as in other subjects. We shall be careful not to tell the children what they can discover for themselves, for we want to stimulate them to think, to express their own thoughts, to desire to know more, not only to answer questions, but also to ask them, remembering the Holy Child in the Temple "both hearing and asking questions." As to revision, there is a danger of taking the freshness out of the stories. It is not necessary for the children to reproduce what we have told them, but review lessons are useful for giving a sense of proportion, and especially for leading the class to see the progressive revelation of the O.T.

In memory work a certain amount of choice should be allowed. If we guide them, the children can find for themselves something worth while to learn in connection with the lessons. Generally speaking, children should not be required to learn by heart what they do not understand, but, "there are times when we wish to lift them above their experience, and to bring them into contact with passages of Scripture which they may be able to appreciate although they transcend their experience."

The "story" made vivid and attractive by every means in our power will never be out of date, but interesting experiments are being made in Scripture on the Dalton method. In the elementary schools we are hampered by the Scripture lesson being obligatory in the first half-hour of the day; it would be better if so much time were allotted per week, the length of the periods being determined by the needs of the work.

Perhaps in the days to come the study of the Bible will take its place freely and naturally with the other subjects: we need not fear that it will ever fail to make its appeal; for deep down in every child's heart lies the germ of the feeling expressed by the Psalmist, "My soul is athirst for God, even for the living God."

The question of books is a very important one; for it is necessary that both teachers and children should read. The Central Library for Students, 9, Galen Place, Bury Street, London, W.C., has theological books on its list which can be had for the cost of postage, but there should be a persistent effort to build up a library of the less expensive books by degrees. If it is worth while to have a history room which can be used by children of a suitable age, it is just as desirable in the case of Bible study.

Sometimes parts of the Bible may well be taken in the literature lesson, as is strongly recommended in the report on "The Teaching of English." Moulton's "Modern Readers' Bible," and the Bible in the "Everyman" series, are useful in this connection.

As to expression work, the object at first is that the child shall turn over the story in his mind and go on

thinking about it. During the earlier years this seems to be done best through drawing or modelling.

In expression work of a creative kind there is probably little to be gained by attempting to get it through the medium of hand work. "If in a history lesson a child makes or models a Norman castle, it is quite clearly part of his historical training : he cannot do it properly without constructing in some little way the life of those who lived in it, nor without answering in some degree the question, 'Why did they live in it—why do we not?' But if he makes an Eastern house after a lesson on the healing of the paralytic man, no kind of *religious* training may be involved, the child is concentrating not on the central feature of the lesson, but on an accidental part of it." It is true that children above nine will be helped by their endeavours to express, through writing, ideas which they have gained from the study of the Bible, but handwork does not appear to be very useful in this connection ; it cannot do more than help the children to visualize the historical background of the story.

In the case of Bible study it seems as if the truly creative aspect of the work is largely hidden ; it must be seen, if it can be seen at all, in the life of the child, and be looked for in the slow development of character and personality, in the unfolding of powers instinct with endless and ever increasing life, which will find their satisfaction in the building of the city of God, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

G. B. A.

EASTLEMES,
COLNE, LANCASHIRE,
Easter, 1922.

P.S.—I am indebted to Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson for permission to insert the poem from "A Muse at Sea," by Commander Hilton Young, on page 121 ; and to the Rev. Hugh Martin, of the Student Christian Movement, for kindly helping me in the correction of the proofs.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR A SYLLABUS IN RELIGIOUS TEACHING

YEAR I.

AGE 7 TO 8 YEARS.

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER : STORIES ILLUSTRATING GOD'S
CARE FOR HIS CHILDREN.

Aim.

1. To illustrate the wonder and the beauty of the world in autumn and early winter.
2. To show the Father's care in providing for the wants of all living creatures (provision of food).

The Time of Harvest.

Introductory Story.—The story of Ruth gives the atmosphere of harvest ; bring out the following ideas :

1. All that has gone to produce the harvest : the ploughing, harrowing, sowing ; the sunshine and the rain ; the reaping, binding, and storing.

The story of the Sower—do not attempt explanation at this age (Matt. xiii. 1-12).

The story of the seed growing secretly (Mark iv. 26-29).

How we show our thankfulness—the story of bringing the firstfruits.

The Harvest Festival, probably the first religious service. (Exod. xxiii. 16 ; Lev. xxiii. 10-14). Harvest Gift Service (Neh. viii.) ; see p. 103.

2. Process of converting wheat into bread.
3. The harvest of food for ourselves and the animals : fruit, vegetables, nuts. Story of "Apple-seed John" in the "Child's World."
4. Storing of food in bulbs and seeds.

Hymns.

"We plough the fields and scatter."

"The sower went forth sowing" (first verse).

Expression Work.

Free drawing to illustrate story of Ruth or harvest-time.

Repetition.

Let the children choose from the following : Gen. viii. 22 ; Ps. lxxv. 9-11, 13 ; cxlv. 15-16 ; cxlvii. 7-9.

Picture of a harvest-field.

Let the children draw on a large sheet of paper pictures of fruit, nuts, and corn, and plant corn in a large box ; it is also helpful to have a sheaf of ripe corn in the classroom.

*Provision of Warmth and Shelter.**A.—For Plants.*

1. Seed coverings (buds, scales, falling leaves).
2. Snow shelter for the plant world. (Take this lesson when the snow first falls.)

B.—For Animals.

1. Fur, feathers, etc.—*e.g.*, the changes in animals' coats in colour and thickness according to the season.
2. Hibernating animals—*e.g.*, squirrel, bat, etc.
3. The birds—robin, also swallow and other migratory birds.

4. The frog, caterpillar, and caddis.

The story of the tortoise and the robin ("Daily Bread").
Parables from Nature.

Story of the Eskimo child ("Some Primary Stories").

Repetition.

"Loving Friend, oh hear our prayer,
Take into Thy loving care
All the leaves and flowers that sleep
In their white beds covered deep ;
Shelter from the wintry storm
All thy snow-birds ; keep them warm."

(Anon.)

“ This is the way the snow comes down.”
(Carey Bonner, 17.)

Ps. cxlviii. 7-10.

C.—For Ourselves.

1. *Homes (Nomadic).*—The Story of Abraham the Tent-Dweller (Gen. xi. 31; xii. 1-9; xiii. ; xviii. 1-9).

- (a) At home as a boy.
- (b) Journey from Mesopotamia to Palestine.
- (c) Entrance to the land—the first worship of God.
- (d) Thanksgiving to God, constantly repeated.
- (e) Abraham and the three Angels—the gift of a child.
- (f) Abraham and Lot—the unselfish choice.

The Children of Israel.—Story of the Father's care over a great family of His children in their journey towards a far-off land.

Emphasize the manna, the water, the pillar of cloud, the Jordan, and the home at the end.

2. *Stories of Parents' Love in the Home.*—With the idea of God the child associates the thought of his father and mother and their love. He receives food, clothing, shelter, everything, through his parents.

Moses in the Bulrushes (Exod. ii. 1-10).

Hannah and Samuel (1 Sam. ii. 18-19, and i. 20-28.)

The Nobleman's Son (John iv. 49-54).

The Prodigal Son (Luke xv. 11-32).

Expression Work.

Free drawing in connection with the stories—*e.g.*, journey of the Israelites.

CHRISTMAS SECTION (*for all Ages*).

Aim.

That the children may understand that the best joy of Christmas is the joy of giving.

Introduction.—Draw out the children's ideas about Christmas.

1. Stories about God and His Christmas Gift.

- (1) Birth of John the Baptist (Luke i. 5-23, 57-80).
- (2) The Angel appears to Mary (Luke i. 26-38).
- (3) The Journey to Bethlehem and the Birth of Christ (Luke ii. 1-7).
- (4) The Shepherds and the Angel's Message (Luke ii. 8-20).
- (5) The Wise Men (Matt. ii. 1-15).

2. Stories about the joy of giving.

The Widow's Mite (Luke xxi. 1-4).

The Alabaster Box of Ointment (Matt. xxvi. 6-13).

3. Stories to illustrate "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Matt. xxv. 40):

Good King Wenceslas. S. Nicholas. S. Christopher. Martin the Soldier. Bride and her Christmas Dream. A Shepherd's Christmas Eve. Eagerheart. Martuin the Shoemaker. The King of the Golden River. Story of Gretchen. Story of the Other Wise Man (see Book List).

4. "They fell down and worshipped Him."

How Brother Francis kept Christmas.

The Story of the Shepherds.

Suggested Pictures.

The Sistine Madonna (Raphael).

The Nativity (Botticelli).

The Grand Duca Madonna (Raphael).

The Holy Night (Correggio).

Repetition.

Isa. ix. 6; Luke ii. ; Matt. xxv. 40; Acts xx. 35.

Expression Work.

Part of the time devoted to religious instruction should this month be given to preparing Christmas gifts for parents, friends, poorer children, etc.

The true Christmas-tree for the child is the tree hung

with gifts made by the child for others. Too often children are made selfish at a time when, of all days in the year, they should be trained to understand the joy of giving.

Hymns.

"Once in Royal David's City."

"Shine out, O Blessed Star."

"Away in the Manger" (Luther; Carey Bonner, 97).

Carols.

"A Carol of the Star" (Carey Bonner, 157).

"Come, come, come to the Manger" (published by Novello and Co.).

JANUARY (*Three Weeks*).

"*Good Tidings for All Nations.*"

Aim.

To realize that Jesus Christ is God's Gift to *all* nations. So we must share our knowledge of Christmas.

Remind the children of the story of the Wise Men who came from distant lands (Matt. ii. 1-12).

Recall the Angel's message and the Shepherds.

Other children of the Heavenly Father.

Stories of Indian children (Brown). ("Tara" Missionary Story Books.)

Stories of African children (Black). ("Janie," "Some Primary Stories.")

Stories of Chinese or Japanese children (Yellow). ("Children in Blue," F. Codrington; "Taro," M. Entwistle.)

FEBRUARY: JOSEPH.

It has been said that the story of Joseph is at once the most artistic and fascinating of O.T. biographies, and the dramatic power of its great scenes is of a very high quality. Tolstoy says that here we have all the fundamentals of a story. All children will delight in it, and it may well be taken again later, when the children are better able to discuss and analyze the characters.

Let the class note Joseph's strong affection for his family, which time did not weaken nor ill-treatment kill. His happy nature made him many friends wherever he went. The secret of it lay in his consciousness that God overruled everything, and the knowledge that "ill which He blesses is our good and unblessed good is ill." He did his duty wherever his lot was cast, "with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not unto men." In later years he was a strong and wise ruler. The good things of this world never spoilt him. He was able to stand prosperity as well as adversity.

The Story.

1. *Joseph at Home* (Gen. xxxvii. 1-11).

Picture the shepherd life—the tents, the flocks, the herds. Jacob's love for Joseph. The coat of many colours. This was "a long garment with sleeves" reaching to the feet, and would not be suitable for people who had to work hard. Joseph's dreams, and the brothers' jealousy.

2. *Joseph taken to Egypt* (Gen. xxxvii. 12-35).

Note the two different stories woven together here. One relates that the brothers sold Joseph to a party of Ishmaelites who were journeying to Egypt (ver. 25-27); the other that they put him into a pit, from which he was rescued by some merchants who were also going to Egypt (ver. 22-24, 28).

Joseph's search for his brothers. Their cruel treatment of him. His long journey into Egypt. Picture the caravan drawn by camels; the great stretches of desert with no grass or trees or water.

3. *Joseph in Potiphar's House* (Gen. xxxix. 1-6).

Describe the arrival in Egypt; the Nile; the strange dresses of the people; the wonderful buildings (see p. 14).

Joseph in the slave-market. Sold to Potiphar. His work.

4. *Joseph in Prison* (Gen. xxxix. 20-23, and xl.).

Describe the prison life. The dreams of Pharaoh's two officers. Joseph's interpretation.

5. *Joseph made Ruler* (Gen. xli.).

Pharaoh's dreams. The seven years of plenty; building of granaries; the storing of corn. Famine.

6. *Joseph and his Brothers* (Gen. xlii.).

Their imprisonment and return.

7. *The Second Visit to Egypt* (Gen. xliii., xliv., xlv.).

Benjamin. The plot. The reconciliation.

8. *Jacob in Egypt* (Gen. xlv. 1-7, xlvii. 1-12, l. 22-26).

The journey. The meeting. Settlement in the land of Goshen. Joseph's death.

MARCH-APRIL (TO EASTER).

The apparent inaction and sleep of winter, the life of trees, shrubs, and flowers, lead up to the Easter thought of the awakening to new life through death. In one sense "there is no death; what seems so is transition."

"The victory of life over death, light over darkness, the triumph of the purposes of God for the world, can be made concrete to the little child in the living symbolic things of Nature. The green shoot piercing the dark soil; the white lily springing from the dark earth; the tree bursting into blossom; by these the truth is given to the child in his own way, through his senses and his emotions" (E. H. Spriggs).

Nature Stories.

1. Waking buds, etc.
2. Insect life—the dragon-fly, butterfly, etc.
3. Water animals—frog; spawn development; tadpoles.
4. Bird life—the return of the swallows and migrant birds; the nest mending and making; eggs and young birds.

"The germination of a seed, the growth of a plant, the unfolding of a bud, the song of a bird, the love and mysteries of a bird's nest, the evolution of a caterpillar into a butterfly—all these Froebel uses to quicken the intellectual and spiritual life of a child."

N.B.—If the teacher uses the Nature Stories in the Nature Study lesson, Bible Stories may be taken in the Scripture lesson :

The Sower (Mark iv. 1-13), or The Seed growing Secretly (Mark iv. 26-29).

The Mustard Seed (Mark iv. 31-32).

The Feeding of the Five Thousand (Mark vi. 34-44).

The Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 1-11 ; Luke xix. 29-40).

Not Lost but Gone Before ("Parables from Nature").

The Message of the Flowers ("Some Primary Stories").

The Waking Butterfly ("Some Primary Stories").

Francis of Assisi and the Birds ("Some Primary Stories").

The Story of the Plants ("Some Primary Stories").

The Nobleman's Son (John iv. 46).

Jairus' Daughter (Mark v. 22-24, 35-43).

The Journey to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13-35).

Christ at the Lake of Galilee (John xxi. 1-14).

Expression Work.

Records in drawing of observations of the life of caterpillars, buds, birds' nests, etc. Let the children draw on a large sheet things that seem dead and yet have life.

Repetition.

"For, lo the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone ;
The flowers appear on the earth,
The time of the singing of birds is come."
(Cant. ii. 11-12.)

"The little flow'rs came through the ground,
At Easter-time, at Easter-time.
They raised their heads and looked around
At happy Easter-time.
And ev'ry little flow'r did say,
'Good people bless this holy day,
For Christ is risen, the angels say,
At happy Easter-time.'

" 'Twas long, and long, and long ago,
 At Easter-time, at Easter-time,
 But still the pure white lilies blow,
 At happy Easter-time.
 And still each little flow'r doth say,
 ' Good people bless this holy day,
 For Christ is risen, the angels say,
 At happy Easter-time.' "

(" Child Songs," Part II., No. 267.)

" O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord."

" Oh to be in England now that April's there !"

" I am He that liveth and was dead ; and behold, I am
 alive for evermore."

MAY : ANIMAL LIFE.

" God made all the creatures, and gave them our love
 and our care " (Browning).

Stories of—

Michael Fairless.

S. Francis and the Wolf.

Sundar Singh.

1. *Our Care for Them.*

Story of Rebecca at the Well.

The Lost Sheep.

Stories about the care of pets, the duty of regularly
 feeding them, etc. : " Dumpy the Pony," " More
 Mother Stories," " The Open Gate."

The Childhood of Florence Nightingale.

2. *Their Service to Us.*

Story of " Black Beauty " (Jarrold, 1s.).

St. Bernard and the Dogs.

Repetition.

" For every beast of the forest is mine,
 And the cattle upon a thousand hills.
 I know all the fowls of the mountains :
 And the wild beasts of the field are mine."

(Ps. l. 10-11.)

“He prayeth best who loveth best
 All things both great and small;
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all.”

(Coleridge.)

“For he who for the beasts hath care,
 And with the birds his feast will share,
 Will find a blessing everywhere.”

“Little lamb, who made thee?”

(Blake.)

JUNE : HUMAN LIFE.

Through stories of God's care for living creatures the child is brought to realize God's care for him.

“Each one of us is a child of God, cared for by His infinite love, with a work to do for Him whatever our work may be; sacred not only in spirit, but in the body of clay which is to be kept pure for Him; with a life, not of this world only, and of a few brief years, but one that is spiritual and immortal” (E. S. Talbot).

Compare the child's powers with those of the animals. The child can read, write, draw—best of all, pray, and learn about God, etc.

Conversation bringing out “Ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

Emphasize our infinite dearness in God's sight; His complete love and care for His children.

Show God's care for His children by stories of—

Ishmael (Gen. xxi. 14-20).

Elijah and the Ravens (1 Kings xvii.).

S. Paul—the Shipwreck (Acts xxvii.).

S. Peter in Prison (Acts xii.).

Elisha at Dothan (2 Kings vi.).

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego (Dan. iii.).

Daniel in the Lions' Den (Dan. vi.).

For His erring children. "God does not cease to love us when we are naughty, but welcomes us with joy when we come to Him to say we are sorry."*

Stories of—

Jacob's Dream (Gen. xxviii. 10-22).

The Prodigal Son (Luke xv.).

Repetition.

Ps. xxiii. and cxxi.

Luke xii. 6-7.

Expression Work.

Free drawing in connection with the stories.

JULY: THE CHILD'S RESPONSE TO THE FATHER'S LOVING CARE.

"God's love and man's response—this is the meaning of our life. 'We love Him because He first loved us.'"

1. *Introductory.*

Revision of the lessons.

2. *The Response of Praise and Thanksgiving.*

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet" (Tennyson).

Francis Thompson, "Ex ore Infantium."

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me" (Ps. l. 23).

Stories.

The Children in the Temple (Matt. xxi. 15, 16). See Year III.

The Ten Lepers (Luke xvii., 11-19).

"Pippa Passes" ("Some Primary Stories"; Entwistle, 1s.).

3. *The Response of Service.*

"God's fellow-workers, working together with Him."

"We are here to help God; we can love Him and help Him too."

* "Stories of Jesus," Blake, p. 108.

“ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”

“ All service ranks the same with God.”

Stories.

Christ in His Home at Nazareth (Luke ii. 40).

The Child Samuel (Samuel iii. 1-19).

The Washing of the Disciples' Feet (John xiii. 1-17).

The Little Captive Maid (2 Kings v.).

The Good Samaritan (Luke xvii.).

Fra Angelico (“ Some Primary Stories ”).

The Boy and the Angel (Browning).

Repetition.

Ps. cvii. 1 and 8.

Luke ii. 13-18.

Hymns.

“ Praise Him, praise Him ” (“ Child Songs,” 148).

Expression Work.

Free drawing in connection with the stories.

YEAR II.

THE child between eight and nine is at an age when he eagerly absorbs ideals through stories of people. The aim of this year is to present ideals of character from the lives of heroes and saints, many of which are taken from the early part of the Old Testament.

We do not know how much of these early Hebrew stories is actual fact, for they were written down many hundreds of years after the events happened, and different accounts have been given by different authors. Their value, however, does not lie in historical accuracy, but in the deep God-consciousness of their heroes. They saw God in everything; they knew Him face to face; they spoke to Him as to a friend ever near, and listened to His voice ever speaking. We cannot too early emphasize the truth that God is always speaking to us, but many of us do not hear because we are not listening.

It has been said that "the relations with God which we find mirrored in the O.T. stories are the relations of a child people with their Heavenly Father; they do appeal to the child; they waken in him a response . . . they are an adequate and compelling force to lead him, while yet a little child, into like personal relations with God."*

But there is a certain risk in the telling of O.T. stories to young children to which we must not shut our eyes. We are finding out more and more that early impressions persist through life, and that the religious life of the adult may be hampered by unworthy conceptions of God unconsciously absorbed from these stories of a primitive and barbarous age. We should therefore carefully select and omit, and check the standards of the O.T. by those of the N.T.

* "Telling Bible Stories," Houghton, p. 12.

SEPTEMBER: STORY OF MOSES (See Year V.).

N.B.—These stories may have grown stale through much telling, but interest can always be aroused again by picturing the setting and the story of the early part of his life from the point of view of Moses himself.

1. *Childhood* (Exod. i. 7-14; ii. 1-10).

Picture Moses as a child in the wonderful land of Egypt, where the sky is such a deep blue, and where rain does not fall for years on end. Why does not everything die? Because of the river Nile.

What would Moses see when the Nile overflowed? "Far beyond the farthest boundary of this Egyptian valley rise huge mountains; then at one season of the year the snow melts, and the water rushes down the rocky slopes in foaming torrents that carry in their headlong course all before them—clay, and gravel, and great stones—and fall at last into the sources of the Nile. Then the great river begins to flow higher. 'Oh, see, the Nile is rising!' cry the watching people in town and village. Indeed it is—rising higher and higher every hour; the clear blue-green water becomes yellow and thick; the brown fields are flooded, orchards, gardens; soon many parts of the country are quite under water—as far as the eye can see one huge shallow lake." Is this a misfortune? (*Cf.* our floods.)

"At the beginning of June the waters rise, but by the end of October they have all flowed away, and the river, clear and shining once more, is quietly running in its old channel, but the lately flooded fields are covered with a thick layer of rich brown mud, in which corn and fruits grow up."*

Let the children imagine Moses watching the building of the huge temples and pyramids; would these cost a great deal in labour?

No wages were paid. Why not? The Hebrew work-people were slaves.

* Duff and Hope, "Where Moses went to School," p. 14.

Picture the slave-people brickmaking. Discuss with the children how bricks are made.* (See p. 57.)

2. *The Education of Moses.*

His mother would teach him about the God of the Hebrews; as a Prince in the Egyptian Court he would have to learn many things, more than if he had been brought up as an ordinary Hebrew boy—"wisdom," reading, writing, astronomy, algebra, arithmetic, painting, grammar. He would also be taught how to ride and wrestle.

3. *How he tried to help his brethren and did no good* (Exod. ii. 11-14).

4. *In Midian* (ver. 14-22).

Picture the secret flight; the long journey over the desert; the well and the shepherdesses; then the long years in the desert.

5. *The Call* (Exod. iii. 1-20).

At last the call comes to help his friends in Egypt. Tell the story very simply (see p. 61). He and Aaron went back to face the angry King. (Omit the plagues.) Then many dreadful things happened in Egypt, and Pharaoh grew frightened. The emphasis should be on the courage of Moses; the children should feel, without being directly told, that Moses was brave because he knew God was always with him, and he could always talk to Him.

6. *The Deliverance* (xii. 1-42).

This can be made very graphic. Every spring there was a feast of thanksgiving, and on the last night of all before the Israelites left they kept this feast, ever since called the Passover. They ate it standing and in haste, all ready for the great escape. Picture the excitement of the children going out into the darkness, with babies, cattle, and their treasures, all huddled together and moving off down one of the great roads. What guided them? The pillar of fire and cloud (xiii. 20-22). It was the custom for men to

* "Friends of the Olden Time," Gardner, p. 27.

go in front of the leader of the caravan carrying a brazier of coals to show the direction of the march. "By day there arises from these coals a column of smoke which . . . may be seen many miles away. By night the glowing coals are lifted aloft so that all may be guided by the light."* It was a symbol to the Israelites of God's presence. Tell shortly of (1) the rumour coming—the sudden cry that the Egyptians are marching after them, and that Pharaoh has changed his mind and means to have them back. (2) The despair of the people, and how they turned on Moses. (3) Their desperate position—water in front of them and their enemies behind. (4) When morning dawned they were safe on the other side.

7. *Life in the Desert* (xv. 22-27).

Miles of burning sand and rocky desert: (a) Lack of water; tell of hot and thirsty days, eager searching in hope of wells; land bare, hard, rocky; no hope of water there. What did the people do? (b) Lack of food (xvi. 1-21). Manna—a white substance that falls from the tamarisk-tree. Quails—a flock of small birds which fly across the Mediterranean and drop down nearly exhausted on the southern shore in myriads, and in migration "cover the ground" and are easily caught after flying far. No doubt a real experience of providential help underlies the accounts.†

8. *The Giving of the Law*.

Moses now feeling the people's need of laws to help them. How will he know what to give them? The arrival at the mountain. Moses goes to be alone with God, to find out what he must do.

Mount Sinai (xix., xx.).—Tell how little the people knew about God and what He wanted them to do. Moses longs for them to know God as he does. When they come to the place where God first called him they encamp, and he leaves them and goes up the mountain.‡ Their preparation; the great storm; their fear. When he came down he read

* Kent.

† Peake, p. 181.

‡ See Vera Walker, "The Pathfinder of Israel," *G.S.J.Q.*

them the laws. It is suggested that the first, third, fifth, sixth, eighth, ninth, tenth, and the opening sentences of the second and fourth commandments be put on the black-board; then the children can read them and give the meaning in their own words—*e.g.*: The Jews were only to have one God; they were not to make graven images to worship; they were not to work on Saturdays; they were to honour their parents; they were not to kill, nor steal, nor tell lies about other people, nor to wish other people had not got things which they wanted.

N.B.—The truth that children suffer for the sins of their parents, which to the Jewish mind presented itself as the direct action of God, is not suitable for eight-year-olds.

The fourth commandment gives the old belief of the Hebrews that in six days God created "the heavens and the earth," which science teaches is incorrect.

For repetition let the children learn the new commandment given by our Lord (John xiii. 34). In connection with this discuss what the new commandment involves—*e.g.*, truthfulness—because we are all brothers and sisters in one family (Eph. iv. 25)—kindness, honesty in little things, courtesy, etc. Moral teaching can naturally come in here if desired, and can be illustrated by stories from everyday life, but it is apt to be a little dull if care is not taken.

9. *The Golden Calf* (Exod. xxxii. 1-6, 15-24, 30-34).

10. *The Spies* (Num. xiii., xiv. 1-9).

A dramatic story which will appeal to the children. Punishment is never arbitrary; the people must wait some years longer in the desert till they have learned to be brave and to act together; see what happened to Caleb (Josh. xiv. 6-15).

11. *The Death of Moses* (Deut. xxxi. 1-6; xxxiv.).

Expression Work.

Pyramids in clay. Pictures of Egypt in sand. Free drawing of the stories. Show hieroglyphic writing.

Repetition.

Ps. cvii. 4-8.

JOSHUA.

The Book of Joshua is full of action, and it will be easy to interest the children in the stories, but the religious value of some of these is doubtful. Some teachers may prefer to omit the capture of Jericho and Fall of Ai. If the book is taken at this age, we might begin like this :

1. Picture Moses wondering who can take his place and asking God what to do. Let the children think if they have heard of anyone who might be their leader. What sort of a man must he be? Let them think out what courage means—not being without fear, but conquering it. Imagine Moses thinking about all the young men around him, and remembering the twelve spies. Were they all too frightened to go on? He remembers Joshua—he could be their leader. Picture Moses (1) sending for him, (2) talking it over with him, (3) laying his hands on him (Deut. xxxi. 14, 15, 23). The teacher should always keep clear in his mind that when the old Hebrew writers say: “The Lord said unto Moses . . . call Joshua” (Deut. xxxi. 14), and “The Lord spake unto Joshua . . . go over this Jordan,” they mean that it had come to the leaders what they ought to do.

2. *How Joshua began his Work* (Josh. i. 1-9).

What was his work? To lead the children of Israel into Canaan. What lay between? Picture Joshua alone; no friend to tell him what to do; in front of him a wide, swirling river and no way across; near him a great camp, not only of soldiers, but of women, children, and animals, all trusting him to lead them through. In his trouble there comes into his mind a picture of Moses coming down from the Mount, his face shining. Can the children remember why Moses' face shone? Joshua knows now where to go for help.

3. *The Crossing of the Jordan* (iii. and iv.).

Here are two contradictory accounts. The earlier one tells that there was a landslip farther up the river near the

village of Adam, and that the waters were dammed up for several hours. Joshua was quick to take his chance, and got the people safely across before the dam gave way (iii. 15, 16).

4. *Capture of Jericho* (vi. 1-21).

Describe a fortified city. Again there are two accounts. The earlier suggests that Jericho was captured by strategy; the walls "falling down" is quite as an Eastern would describe the success of a sudden assault. Perhaps the gates were opened by the relatives of Rahab. The teacher should omit that the inhabitants were all destroyed. "To present to young children differing ethical codes and standards is only to confuse their minds, and it may be argued that even if the best teaching follows in their early teens the confusion really remains. We grown-ups, as a consequence of our training, have no clearly defined code of right and wrong; we find ourselves capable of holding at the same time the conflicting codes of both the Old and New Testaments. In time of peace and in private life the New Testament ethic is recognized, but in war-time or in industrial strife the O.T. teaching of our childhood surges up from our subconsciousness, and, being reinforced by passion, dominates the will. We do not want to perpetuate this state of things in the next generation."*

GIDEON.

His Obedience.

Obedience is often felt by the child to be merely a matter of submission, but if we can show that in this case it had an element of adventure and involved a tremendous risk, the children will catch a truer notion of what it can sometimes mean, which may make a genuine appeal to them.

Then as now "National peril always arose from the desire to get on, or to follow the line of least resistance. National strength lay in self-forgetting enthusiasm for a common cause and devotion to the commands of God.

* *T. and T.*, March, 1921.

Wherever there is a faith like Gideon's, the results are just as surprising."*

The period during which the Jews were ruled by Judges was a time of great unrest. The Israelites were far from being in the position of conquerors of the country. They were surrounded by jealous neighbours, and their life and property were in constant danger.

"They gradually gained possession of villages and even towns, and made the natives their slaves. From time to time, as they grew more powerful, they fought with them. When this happened, all the Israelites in a district would follow a man of character and courage, who placed himself at their head. But in the case of Gideon the war was against a horde of Bedouin marauders from the eastern desert."†

- (1) His Call (Judg. vi. 1-3, 7, 11-24).
- (2) Throwing down the Altar of Baal (25-32).
- (3) His Victory over the Midianites (vii.).

CHRISTMAS SECTION. (See Year I.)

JANUARY: MISSIONARY SECTION.

"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light."

How the Light Spread.

1. *To Africa.*

Story of Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts viii. 26-39). Take from the point of view of the latter, picturing his home, treasurer to the black Queen, his journey to Jerusalem to find out more about the true God, and the return (see Year IV.).

2. *To Europe.*

Story of S. Paul at Philippi (Acts xvi. 8-40).

* Dummelow.

† Peake (adapted), p. 65.

3. *To England.*

Story of Gregory and the Slave-Boys.

Story of the Coming of S. Augustine to Kent.

4. *To Scotland.*

Story of Columba.

FEBRUARY TO MARCH : THE STORY OF SAMUEL.
(See Year V.)

Listening to God.

1. Birth and Childhood (1 Sam. i., ii. 18-21).
2. Samuel's Call (1 Sam. iii.).
3. The Battle, and the Death of Eli (Sam. iv. 1-18).
4. Samuel Anointing Saul (1 Sam. ix., x.).
5. The Rejection of Saul (1 Sam. xv.).

Repetition.

1 Sam. iii. 9-10. "Hushed was the evening hymn."

THE STORY OF DAVID. (See Year V.)

Points to be Brought Out.—His bravery, and willingness to forgive.

1. *David the Boy.*

- (1) David the Shepherd-Boy (1 Sam. xvii. 12-15, 34-36).
- (2) The Anointing of David (1 Sam. xvi. 1-13).
- (3) David and Goliath (1 Sam. xvii.).
- (4) His playing before Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 14-23).

2. *David the Man.*

- (1) David sparing Saul's life : Two stories (1 Sam. xxiv., xxvi.).
- (2) David and Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ix.).
- (3) David the King : his desire to build a Temple ; his preparation for it (2 Sam. vii. ; 1 Chron. xxii. 1-16).

Repetition.

Ps. xxiii. ; Rom. xii. 20-21.

Note on Shepherd Life in Palestine.

The personal appearance of the Eastern shepherd has changed but little since Bible times—*e.g.*:

(1) *Cloak*.—"He still wraps himself in his large cloak of sheep-skin or thick material woven of wool, goat's hair, or camel's hair. This protects him from cold and rain by day, and is his blanket at night. The inner pouch in the breast is large enough to hold a newborn lamb or kid, when it has to be helped over rough places."

(2) *Rod*.—Hanging by his side or sheathed in a long narrow pouch is his oak club. The shepherd's sling was made of goat's hair; the part for the stone was of a diamond shape with a small slit in the middle, so that when a stone was pressed into it, it closed around like a bag. ". . . the shepherds lead their flocks, in search of good pasture, from place to place—up the slopes, through the deep ravines, and along the water-course." Daily the shepherd takes the flock to the "still waters" of an overflow from a spring or a calm reach near a stream, where the nervous sheep can drink in safety. This was in old times just as it is to-day.

"The shepherd leads his own flock through the narrow and dark ravines, 'the valley of the shadow,' in search of water and pasture, which, when found, is a 'table' for the hungry sheep, 'in the presence of their enemies.' These 'enemies' of the flock—robbers, wild beasts, and birds of prey—lurk behind rocks and in caves, ready to pounce or swoop down on the sheep astray in the narrow ravine, but the shepherd with his thin rod keeps his flock together, and his club is ever ready to defend them from their foes.

"On the hill-tops are many thorny plants, the spiky thorns of which catch in the long wool and often pierce the face and other unprotected parts of the body. The shepherd gathers his flock into the sheepfold or place of shelter for the evening, and carefully takes out the thorns and anoints the wounds with oil."*

* Nicholls, "Scenic Studies," p. 48.

THE STORY OF SOLOMON.

The following stories contain descriptions of Eastern life which strongly appeal to children :

1. His Dream (1 Kings iii. 5-15). Let the children discuss the requests the King might have made.
2. The Queen of Sheba (1 Kings x. 1-14). Can the children imagine anything more dazzling and glorious than this palace? See Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vi. 29). The teacher should have some flowers to show the children.
3. The Building of the Temple (1 Kings vi.). Picture to the children the external beauty of the Temple, with its flashing roof, and what they would have seen inside.
4. The Dedication (1 Kings viii.).

APRIL : THE STORY OF ELIJAH. (See Year V.)

An Example of Courage in Standing up for the Right.

1. The Ravens, and the Widow of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 1-16).
2. Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings xviii. 1-39).
3. The Coming of the Rain (1 Kings xviii. 41-end).
4. Elijah flying for his Life (1 Kings xix. 1-21).
5. Naboth's Vineyard (1 Kings xxi.).
6. Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings ii. 1-15).

Examples of courage can be taken from the lives of Christians in far-off lands—e.g., Pastor Hsi, Khama, Erastus, Africander.

THE STORY OF ELISHA.

An Example of Kindness.

1. How Elisha helped the Widow (2 Kings iv. 1-7).
2. Elisha and the Shunamite Woman (2 Kings iv. 8-37).
3. Elisha and Naaman (2 Kings v. 1-19). Omit Gehazi.
4. Elisha at Dothan (2 Kings vi. 8-23).

Repetition.

Ps. xxxiv. 6-8.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A

MAY-JULY : STORIES OF S. FRANCIS.

An Example of Love and Joy.

1. His early life and how he left it.
2. How he built the Church.
3. How he and the Brothers preached to the People.

Repetition.

Ps. xxix., some verses.

STORY OF PALISSY THE POTTER.*

An Example of Perseverance.

STORY OF RUTH.

An Example of Unselfishness.

1. Ruth and Naomi (Ruth i.).
2. The Gleaning (Ruth ii.).

THE STORY OF DANIEL. (See Year VII.)

An Example of Courage.

1. Daniel at the Court of Babylon (Dan. i.).
2. Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (Dan. ii. 1-28, 47-49).
3. The Fiery Furnace (Dan. iii.).
4. Daniel in the Lions' Den (Dan. vi.)

OTHER EXAMPLES OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

The story of—

Florence Nightingale.

Grace Darling.

Wilberforce and the Slave Trade.

S. Vincent de Paul.

Mary Reed.

Some who have devoted their lives to helping children :

Lord Shaftesbury.

Dr. Barnardo.

* "Great Deeds in God's Name," National Adult School Union, 18.

S. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

1. *His Birth* (Luke i. 5-23, 57-80).

The teacher should bear in mind in teaching this lesson the eager expectation and longing for the Messiah and coming of the Kingdom which was world-wide at this time. "Thy prayer is heard" was probably not only a prayer for the child, but the fulfilment of a promise to the nation.

Picture the old man Zacharias leaving home and going to Jerusalem. "Every morning at nine o'clock, and every afternoon at three, a priest entered the Holy Place to sprinkle the incense offering on the golden altar. One day during his week of attendance in the Temple the lot fell upon Zacharias. So, in his white robes, with bare feet and covered head, he went slowly up through court after court to the entrance of the Holy Place. There a bell rang; Zacharias disappeared within the sacred enclosure, separated from the Holy of Holies itself only by the splendid veil of partition." The awe and wonder of the vision seems to have taken away the power of speech. Cf. the effect of shock to-day—shell-shock, etc.

2. *His Childhood and Youth.*

Where John grew up (Luke i. 80).

The wilderness of Judæa. "How lonely and bare it was in the heat of summer! The hills often cinder-coloured, and sometimes without a shrub from base to summit. The bushes growing on the more level ground were bluish and looked shadow-like in the stifling air. Scarcely a bird could be seen, only a few wild beasts prowled and roared afar; but the locusts were always in sight, vivid yellow, and tossed hither and thither in the air by the hot winds. Only the wild bee, with its pleasant hum, gave some hint of the sounds about the old home in the white-walled house where John first saw the light."* Here he went to talk and listen to God; he was never dull.

"It was a hard life. His only covering was a long

* Gillie, "Kinsmen and Friends of Jesus."

rough shirt of camel's hair, fastened with a leather belt, for he had no money, and did not need a girdle with its big pocket. For food he had locust beans, and he took the honey from the wild bees that made their hives in the crevices of the rocks. These and the goats that sometimes crossed his path were almost the only living things in that desolate place. All his hours were filled with thought and prayer and longing. Clearer and brighter grew the hope of the Great Deliverer."*

Baptizing by the Jordan (Matt. iii.).—Describe the crowd: tax-gatherers, Roman soldiers, etc.

3. *His Imprisonment and Death.*

His friends seek Jesus. (Read Luke vii. 18-27, etc.; Matt. xi. 2-11).

NATIONAL SAINTS.

These lessons may be given here or on the proper days, as thought desirable.

1. *S. George*.—Who he was. A soldier in the Roman Army (c. 270). Son of Christian parents. In high favour with the Emperor Diocletian; martyred because he would not deny Christ.

Why he is the Patron Saint of England. A much loved saint in the East, so King Richard when on the Crusades placed his cause under S. George's protection. Flag a red cross upon a white ground. Legend says that during the fighting, when the Christian armies were being defeated, S. George appeared riding in the midst of the battle; at the sight the soldiers rallied and were victorious. Later, in 1222, Edward I. declared S. George to be henceforth the Patron Saint of England. Story of the Dragon.

2. *S. Andrew* (John i. 35-42).—A fisher-boy at Capernaum. (See Year III., Boyhood of S. Peter.) First brought his own brother to Jesus Christ. Quick to notice small things—"There is a lad here." "His words few, his actions prompt, ready to serve in the humblest way." Not

* Gillie, "The Story of Stories."

afraid of responsibility nor of making a decision—*e.g.*, bringing the Greeks to Jesus.

3. *S. Patrick*.—The first missionary to Ireland. (See Year IV.)*

4. *Edward the Confessor*.—Patron Saint of England before S. George.†

5. *S. David of Wales*.‡

N.B.—Some of the stories suitable for Autumn, Spring, and Easter, from Year I., should be taken again at the seasons. It might be well to take S. John the Baptist before the Christmas stories, and if there is too much O.T. the stories from S. Peter (p. 41) can be given, and those of Elijah and Elisha left until Year III.

* "The Good News of Christ," Hilton. † *Ibid.*

‡ See "Our Island Saints," Steedman.

YEAR III

SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER : THE STORY OF ABRAHAM.

Read "The Period of The Patriarchs."

An Example of Faith and Obedience.

"By faith Abraham . . . when he was called, obeyed . . . and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. xi. 8).

N.B.—The element of adventure in the story will make a strong appeal at this age, but can the stories of these old-time heroes really help the children?

"The Patriarchs appeal to us, interest, and help us, because they are types of classes of men; their adventures were not unfamiliar experiences in the ancient East, and still stand as vivid pictures and symbols of crises in human life to-day. There have been—there still are—many Abrahams who have gone out, not knowing whither they went, in obedience to some dictate of conscience, to some prospect of spiritual advantage, rightly interpreted as the call of God; many Jacobs who have, so to speak, stumbled into the Divine Presence, when their only thought was headlong flight from the consequences of weakness, folly, and sin" (Century Bible "Genesis").

1. *Abraham leaving Home* (Gen. xii. 1-9).

Picture the journey, the tent dwellings and wandering life, in contrast to the former home in the city; the arrival in the goodly land of Canaan; the building of an altar; the moving from place to place for fresh pastures, etc.

2. *Abraham and Lot* (Gen. xiii.).

3. *How Abraham rescued Lot* (Gen. xiv. 1-2, 12-16, 21-24).

N.B.—Parts of the story of Jacob could be taken here if desired, but he is a very difficult character for children to understand.

Other Men who obeyed the Call.

“By faith . . . they went out” : Livingstone, Africa ; Mackay, Uganda ; Patteson, New Zealand ; Grenfell, Labrador ; Mary Slessor, Africa ; Chalmers, Papuan Islands ; Peck, Esquimaux ; Carey, India.

N.B.—The little child’s interests are bounded by the limited sphere of his own experience—his home, the people he knows ; the child of nine or ten is interested in people all over the world. Therefore stories of missionary heroes and their adventures in far-off lands will have a special appeal now, but we must be alive to the danger of so telling them that in the end the children will look down on coloured people. It is a good rule never to tell of foolish native customs unless the child can understand the reason that prompted them.

We, too, should be frightened of evil spirits and wear charms if brave men had not come to tell us of the Father who made everything and who loves us. “It is wise not to dwell on the ignorance of the races without a corresponding emphasis on the qualities of heart and hand which they possess.”* A great number of people live in dirt and ignorance, but what wonderful things they can do—ivory carving, the brasswork of India, the painting and embroidery of the Japanese, the temples, etc.

Many heathen mothers love their children as much as white mothers, and we should try to show our children that every nation has something to give to the others.

* E. Spriggs, *T. and T.*

THE STORY OF JESUS CHRIST.

"Religion in its essence is friendship with God."

"Only a friend of Jesus can make others His friends."

The children have now heard the stories of many lives, each of which has shown some special beauty and strength of character, but also many weaknesses; now they will be ready for the story of the perfect life of Jesus Christ. The stories of Him so far have been disconnected, each one complete in itself; at this age we begin to connect them.

How shall we present Him? What part of His life will make the strongest appeal? Our aim is that they should learn to love Him and want Him for their Friend. We want to let them see Him as the children saw Him in the days of old. We know that all the children in Nazareth would feel He was their Friend, and that when He came down the village street they would crowd round Him, eager to tell Him about their games and small pleasures.

S. Mark and others give vivid pictures of the crowds who followed Him; they were too much taken up with grown-up people—the scribes, the Pharisees, the sick, the outcasts—to remember the children. But they must have been there almost always, for where do you find a crowd without them? They would listen intently to His stories, which were new ones, not like those told by the old Rabbis; and even if some of these were beyond them, He Himself would always attract them. Sometimes we might let our children picture themselves as listening to Him in the very front of the crowd or in a group far away in a corner. We must select from His stories, because for some they are not ready. We shall show Him making people well, helping everybody, never too busy to listen to anyone who wanted to talk to Him, and never impatient or cross if they did not quickly understand what He meant.

DECEMBER: THE BIRTH OF CHRIST. (See Christmas Section, Year I.)

(N.B.—Our years A.D. date from this time.)

1. *The Land where Jesus lived.*

2. *The Angel's Message* (Luke i. 26-33, 38).

Picture Nazareth—little town on hillside, narrow streets, small square houses, blue sky, gardens, grapes, orchards, etc.

3. *The Visit to Elizabeth* (Luke i. 39-56).

Picture Mary on her way to the hill-country.

4. *The Journey to Bethlehem, and the Birth of Christ* (Luke ii. 1-7).

N.B.—At this age the children can be interested in the great Emperor Cæsar, 31 B.C. to 14 A.D., and also in a description of Bethlehem.

“From Jerusalem the road to the little town is uphill all the way, rising 2,500 feet in 40 miles. The place is built on a part of Judæa's tableland. It is 2,700 feet above sea-level, and the air is clear and dry. It stretches along the hillside, and from its highest part we can see to the east as far as to the Dead Sea, to the north the hills that hide Jerusalem. The main street is only a long and narrow lane, often crowded with people. They wear the turban rather than the fez, and the women have a special local head-dress and a peculiar cloak. The children go barefooted and are in rags. You can never look down a Palestine street without seeing one at least of the half-wild street dogs. At the east end of the town there is the village square—filled as in the days of old with camels and donkeys, the latter loaded with firewood. There is the oldest Greek Church in the world, ‘the Church of the Nativity,’ and there is the inn—a bare open place.”

Postcards of the Holy Land are useful as giving the children some idea of the Eastern houses.

(1) Picture Joseph bringing the news into the little house at Nazareth: "Letter from the Emperor; must travel to Bethlehem."

(2) Describe hurried preparation for the journey; the start, Mary riding on an ass, always in her mind what the Angel had said to her.

(3) Tell of the lights of Bethlehem seen on the evening of the fourth day; from house to house they go—"No room, no room."

(4) The arrival; Mary's disappointment; the innkeeper's words, "There is the stable." So on fresh, clean straw with the ox and the ass they rest.

That night the Angel's words came true; Mary's little Baby, Jesus Christ, was born.

(5) The story of the shepherds (Luke ii. 8-20).

Expression Work.

(1) A relief map in paper pulp is very desirable, and can be made with old copy-books or tissue paper soaked. If this is impossible, have a sand model. It should show the hills (Mount Hermon, 9,000 feet high); the valley of the Jordan; the two lakes (the Dead Sea, 1,300 feet below sea-level); the sea-coast. The children should know the positions of Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem, and mark them with sticks or labels.

(2) Model of an Eastern inn.

A new Christmas hymn or carol should be learnt, and Christmas cards or mottoes can be illuminated, the idea of giving being still prominent.

Repetition.

Luke ii. 13, 14.

Hymn.

"O little town of Bethlehem" (Phillips Brooks).

JANUARY : THE EARLY LIFE OF JESUS.

1. *The Wise Men* (Matt. ii. 1-12).
2. *The Presentation in the Temple* (Luke ii. 22-39).
3. *The Flight into Egypt and Return to Nazareth* (Matt. ii. 13-23).

"There will be two climaxes in this story—the first where the fugitives cross the river boundary into Egypt and are safe; the second, and greater, where they reach Nazareth on the return journey, all fear of Herod gone for ever."*

Trace the route (250 miles). Picture the hurried departure, the journey, the stay in Egypt, and the return through Judæa to Nazareth. (See S. Matt., Year VII.)

"Whilst Judæa was on no direct route, Galilee was covered with roads which led in many directions to the coast, to the Jordan, from Egypt to Assyria, etc. The main road from Damascus to the sea went through Galilee, and on it was a continuous procession of merchants and merchandise, for along it came the products of India, on their way to Venice and Genoa by way of Bagdad."†

4. *The Home at Nazareth* (Luke ii. 40).

Picture Nazareth and the surrounding country. "Nazareth rests in a basin among hills, but the moment you climb to the edge of this basin . . . what a view you have!"‡ "To the north the mountains of Galilee, with snowy Hermon towering above them; to the west the ridge of Carmel, the coast of Tyre, and the Mediterranean; a few miles to the east the wooded bulk of Tabor; and to the south the plain of Esdraelon, with the mountains of Ephraim beyond."§

Describe—(a) A Jewish house; (b) Jewish child-life; small household tasks; synagogue school at six years old, all seated on floor; games of weddings and funerals (Luke vii. 32).

* "Stories of Jesus," p. 82.

‡ G. A. Smith, p. 433.

† *T. and T.*

§ Stalker (adapted), p. 22.

5. *The Visit to the Temple* (Luke ii. 41-51).

Picture—(a) *the early start*, (b) *the noontide rest*.

N.B.—“From 12-3 p.m. is the time of greatest heat (Matt. xx. 12). The fierce rays strike down from above, the glare flashes up from the stony ground, the air quivers, and the mountains have a flattened-down appearance under the heat haze. Plants hang limp and drooping, birds cease to twitter in the branches, the shepherd gathers his flock around him in the shelter of a walnut-tree by the brook and goes to sleep.”*

(c) *Tents pitched at night*.

(d) *Jerusalem in sight*. “Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion . . . the city of the great King” (Ps. xlviii. 2).

The “Songs of Ascent” (Ps. cxx.-cxxxiv.) were always sung on this journey. Let the children choose one of these to learn, and let them sing it imagining they are amongst the pilgrims nearing Jerusalem.

(e) *The scenes in Jerusalem*. The streets would be crowded with Jews from other countries as well as from all parts of Palestine.

Recall the Passover, the feast at which the lamb was eaten, repeated every year.

(f) *The start for home*.

(g) *The search*.

(h) *Jesus found in the Temple*. “Round the Temple courts might be found Rabbis teaching groups of people. In the great outer court animals were sold for the offerings, and no one but a Jew might go beyond it. The Rabbis (teachers) who explained the Law probably sat in the beautiful halls with rows of tall pillars that went along each side of the court. The groups of listeners probably included children, some of whom would have come up to Jerusalem for the first time.”

In one such group the child Jesus is found. “He, who had already pondered over what His parents had taught Him of the coming of the Kingdom, breaks in with apt questions, amazing the Rabbis with His interest and His

* Mackie, p. 11.

knowledge of the Scriptures. Then comes the troubled Mother and her natural rebuke: 'We have been looking everywhere for you.' He answers: 'Why, I thought you would be sure to know where I was, in My Father's house.'

"In childhood spiritual things are as real as material things; when we grow older, to most of us, the world is too much with us, and we need something to give us entrance again into the spiritual world. But with Jesus it was not so; His parents had taught Him that the Temple was God's house, and He had learnt to look forward to the time when He would be able to go up with them to worship in that glorious place. To Him all this was intensely real, with a reality which grew and deepened as the years went on; hence He cannot understand why they should have hesitated for a moment as to where they would find Him."*

6. *The Carpenter* (Mark vi. 3).

(a) Carpenter's work now—*e.g.*, making tables, chairs, etc.

(b) Carpenter's work then—yoke, plough, manger, chests, wheels.

"The townsfolk, the farmers, the shepherds, the children, all knew Him. He was 'the Carpenter' to whom they went, and whom they always found ready to fix what they brought. They had seen Him at work, bending over His tools, from early morning till evening came. They knew that whatever He fixed was fixed well, and whatever He built would be strong."†

FEBRUARY-APRIL: HOW JESUS PREPARED FOR HIS WORK.

1. *The Baptism of Jesus* (Matt. iii. 13-17; Mark i. 9-11; John i. 29-34).

(a) Describe and picture the news of John the Baptist's preaching coming to Nazareth. What would the people say? "A new prophet has come; he wears a hair cloak and a leather girdle; he is now beside the Jordan, and all the people are hurrying to him."

* Hooke (adapted), pp. 10, 11.

† Palmer.

(b) Tell of Jesus leaving home, His journey across the plain of Esdraelon, and down the Jordan valley to the ford near Jericho, at last seeing in the distance the crowd of pilgrims that marked the presence of the Baptist.

(c) The Baptism.

2. *The Temptation of Jesus* (Mark i. 12, 13; see p. 111).

Picture the scene—wild, desolate, rocky wilderness, where wild beasts lived; there Jesus went to be quite alone, and to think how He was going to teach the people about God.

N.B.—It is better to leave detailed teaching of our Lord's temptation until later.

Repetition.

Ps. xci. 10-12, 15, 16.

HIS WORK OF HEALING AND TEACHING—*e.g.*:

- (1) His Return to Galilee, and the Healing of the Nobleman's Son (John iv. 46-54).
- (2) The Stilling of the Storm (Mark iv. 35-41; Luke viii. 22-25).
- (3) The Call of the First Disciples (Matt. iv. 18-22).
- (4) The Call of Matthew (Matt. ix. 9-10).
- (5) The Cleansing of the Leper (Matt. viii. 1-4).
- (6) The Man Sick of the Palsy (Matt. ix. 1-8).
- (7) The Cripple at the Pool (John v. 1-16).
- (8) His Rejection at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16-31; Isa. lxi. 1-3).

STORIES JESUS TOLD.

- (1) About God's love for each one :
 - (a) The Lost Sheep (Luke xv. 1-7).
 - (b) The Prodigal Son (Luke xv. 11-32).
- (2) About being kind to others :
 - (a) The Good Samaritan (Luke x. 29-37).
 - (b) Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19-31).
 - (c) "Inasmuch" (Matt. xxv. 31-46).

"Christ would have us to realize that He Himself is hidden in the man in the street, the passing stranger, the

casual acquaintance, the man whom we serve, the man who serves us, our friend and our loved one in the home. If we would but see it, everyone with whom we have to do is the bearer of a revelation of God.”*

(3) About ourselves :

The Talents (Matt. xxv. 14-28).

On the Way to Jerusalem.

(1) The Raising of Lazarus (John xi. 1-44).

Begin by describing the home at Bethany, where Jesus was always welcome and often stayed (Luke x. 38-39).

(2) At Jericho :

(a) Bartimæus (Luke xviii. 35) ; (b) Zacchæus (xix. 1-10).

(3) The supper at Bethany (John xii. 1-11).

THE LAST WEEK.

The Triumphal Entry (Matt. xxi. 1-11 ; Mark xi. 1-11).

N.B.—It is suggested that this story be told from the point of view of a child in Jerusalem at this time. The Feasts must have been exciting times for children—the arrival of pilgrims, the happy welcoming of friends, the gradual filling of every guest-chamber, the tents outside the city, the general bustle and excitement. “The sound of far-away voices cheering and rejoicing, the sight of an excited throng rounding the bend of the hill, waving branches, triumphant cries, a pathway leafy and green, One riding as a King, whilst those around sang glad ‘Hosannas.’

“The children run out of the city gates and along the road to mingle with the throng, seizing and waving palm-branches, and shouting with the rest.”†

The Next Days (Matt. xxi. 14-17).

The crowded Temple courts ; the children see the King of yesterday healing the blind and lame ; again they cry “Hosanna, Hosanna.”

S. John is sent to prepare for the Passover feast (Luke xxii. 7-13 ; Matt. xxvi. 17-20). Show plan of seats

* J. Stuart Weir, “The Challenge.” † V. D. Lester, *T. and T.*

and table, three sides of a square, the chief seats in the centre of each side.

"One of you shall betray Me." Judas goes out (Matt. xxvi. 21-25; John xiii. 21-30).

The Last Supper (Matt. xxvi. 26-30).

The sadness of the disciples. The walk in the garden. The arrest.

The Trial under Pilate and the Crucifixion (Mark xv.; John xviii. 28; xix.).

N.B.—Many teachers of experience feel that it is better not to take the stories of the Trial and Crucifixion in any detail; they think that it weakens the spiritual perception of a child to become too familiar with the details of the Passion when as yet he has no experience which will enable him to apprehend its meaning. It is possible to take it from the point of view of someone in the crowd, perhaps one of the disciples—e.g., S. John.

STORIES OF THE RESURRECTION.

"Let the child feel Christ is near him,
By your faith will grow his own;
Death nor danger will affright him
If he never feel alone."

(1) The First Easter Morning (Matt. xxviii. 1-15; Mark xvi. 1-11; John xx. 1-18).

(2) The Journey to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13-35).

N.B.—"The children will not be much interested in the conversation on the road to Emmaus, the topics of which are largely beyond their comprehension. That which *will* appeal to them in this story is the glad surprise of the disciples when they found that the stranger was Jesus, which is the climax of the story" (children love surprises).*

(3) The Appearance in the Evening (Luke xxiv. 36-43).

(4) The Appearance to S. Thomas (John xx. 24-29).

(5) The Appearance by the Lake of Galilee (John xxi. 1-14).

* "Stories of Jesus," p. 122 (adapted).

SUNDAY : SUGGESTIONS FOR LESSONS FOR DIFFERENT AGES.

Somewhere we should give the children teaching on "Sunday." This seems to come naturally after the stories of the Resurrection, with which it should always be connected. We get into hopeless difficulties if we try to base its observance on the fourth commandment.

Why the Disciples kept Sunday.—"On that day, the first day of the week . . . Jesus came and stood in the midst. . . . The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord" (John xx.). "And after eight days again . . . Jesus cometh" (ver. 26).

How They kept it.—After this the disciples wanted to mark the first day of the week by praise and thanksgiving. Picture them meeting together for worship on that day.

Why We keep it.—"I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. i. 18). The remembrance that He is with us still makes the day full of joy for us. Picture how we meet together to worship Him.

[*Why the Jews kept the Sabbath.*—The origin of the Sabbath is uncertain; it goes back to very ancient times, and was probably of Babylonian origin. An early Assyrian tablet has this inscription: "The Sabbath is the day of rest of the heart." The Jews altered the character of the day; "with deep religious insight they realized that unless some time was regularly offered to God, no time was likely to be consciously spent in His service. So at sunset on the sixth day the 'Cease work' sounds out (this is the meaning of the word 'Sabbath')."* Later the Jews wanted a sanction for the Sabbath, so the author of the Deuteronomic code explained the custom (see Deut. v. 15).

There was no real connection between the deliverance from Egypt and keeping the seventh day, so a later editor of the commandments substituted what he thought to be a better explanation: "God rested the seventh day: wherefore God blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Ex. xx. 11).

The institution of the Sabbath possibly gave to the writer

* Peake, p. 185.

of the Creation story—P—the idea of the process of Creation being arranged in days, the seventh to follow as a rest day.

How the Jews kept the Sabbath.—First for rest, second for worship. Picture how the child Jesus kept it. Preparation on Friday night; all the tools and week-day work put away, meals prepared for the morrow, lighting of the Sabbath lamp. Next day goes with His Mother to the synagogue, sits in the gallery with her, sings the Psalms as we still do; afterwards she has time to tell Him stories. It must have been a happy day in that home.]

How We should keep Sunday.—We want the main thought for the children to be that this is a happy day, a day of worship, of learning more about God, and of doing kind things for others as Jesus did (Mark i.). Let them understand that it is a wonderful gift from God. "The Sabbath was made for man" (Mark ii. 27). Do not let them think of it as a day when they must not do this or that, but consider whether this or that is wrong by the test, "Does it spoil or waste the day for ourselves or others?"

"Our Sunday, our rest day, has brought to us and to our country more than we can know. . . . It has kept strong in us the sense of allegiance to an unseen Power. . . . It has been to every one of us, at some time or other, as an open gate to heaven, through which, if only for a moment, we have caught a glimpse of Him who has made it a promise, a beginning, a rest, not from labour, but for labour."*

"The Sundays of man's life,
Threaded together on time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternal glorious King;
On Sunday heaven's gate stands ope;
Blessings are plentiful and rife,
More plentiful than hope."

(George Herbert.)

* Westcott, "Christian Aspects of Life," p. 137.

(6) The Ascension (Luke xxiv. 50-53; Acts i. 9-11).
(See p. 44.)

(7) The Last Command (Matt. xxviii. 16-20; Luke xxiv. 47).

In connection with this give missionary stories—*e.g.*:

Williams the Seafarer.

Gilmour of Mongolia.

LIFE OF S. PETER.

1. *His Boyhood.*

(a) Home by the sea. Life in fishing village; every night at sunset boats went out, sails set, nets on board, lights shining on water; sometimes long cold nights. Every morning came back, often with cargoes of fish; some sold in markets, others taken to great salting places, then sent on camels or asses to other towns.

(b) Sabbath day. Friday night no boats go out—why not? The preparation (see John xix. 31). Synagogue service—what stories would S. Peter hear? Also hear of a great King who was coming.

2. *The First Sight of Jesus Christ* (John i. 35-42).

(a) Rumours of S. John the Baptist reach S. Peter; starting off to hear him. "Behold the Lamb of God"—the new name.

(b) Back to the old life. Let the children think how the four friends would talk together of the new Friend when out at night, or mending their nets, etc. When would they see Him again?

3. *Some Time Later* (Mark i. 16-20; Luke v. 1-11).

(a) The call of S. Peter.

(b) The miraculous draught of fishes. S. Peter's feelings partly wonder, partly shame; suddenly said: "Sir, I think you had better go away from me; I am not good like you."

4. *A Sabbath Day in S. Peter's Life* (Mark i. 21-39).

(a) The synagogue. The new Teacher. The disturbance (*cf.* someone ill in church or chapel carried out); the man

healed; excitement of the people afterwards; the news spreading.

(b) The healing of Peter's wife's mother: "Straightway they tell Him of her."

(c) When the sun was set, "the city gathered together at the door." Picture narrow streets filled with sick folk; in the fading light Jesus moves from one to the other, perhaps for several hours. How would He feel afterwards?

N.B.—Compare with teacher's weariness after busy time dealing with individual children; we think a good night's rest needed. Another way of renewal of strength (Mark i. 35).

5. *S. Peter chosen to be an Apostle* (Luke vi. 12-26).

6. *S. Peter sees the Raising of Jairus' Daughter* (Mark v. 21-24, 35-43).

7. *The Disciples going out by themselves to preach* (Matt. x. 5-15).

Where were they to go? Their luggage and lodgings. Why should they stay in the same house? Each with his friend, six couples. Whom would S. Peter choose?

They come back. Picture the joy of talking it over with our Lord—what they had done and what they had taught. They cross the lake (Mark vi. 30, 31; Luke ix. 10).

8. *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* (Matt. xiv. 13-21; Mark vi. 32-44).

9. *S. Peter walking on the sea* (Matt. xiv. 22-33).

10. "*But whom do you say that I am?*" (Mark viii. 27-39).
(See p. 121.)

11. *The Transfiguration* (Mark ix. 2-10).

12. *The Cleansing of the Temple* (Mark xi. 15-18).

13. *The Incidents in the Upper Room.*

(a) S. Peter and S. John sent to prepare (Mark xiv. 12-16).

(b) The Washing of the Disciples' Feet (John xiii. 4-10).

(c) The Betrayal foretold (Matt. xxvi. 20-25; John xiii. 21-30).

(d) S. Peter warned (Luke xxii. 31-34; John xiii. 36-38).

14. *S. Peter's Fall* (John xviii. 1-27).

The arrest, and flight of the disciples. S. Peter follows to the high-priest's palace. His denial. His sorrow (Luke xxii. 61-62).

15. *Easter Morning* (John xx. 1-10; Mark xvi. 7).

S. Peter sees the Risen Lord (Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5).

16. *The Work entrusted to him* (John xxi. 15-23).

N.B. — For these lessons the teacher should read p. 110 ff. Also "Kinsfolk and Friends of Jesus" and "Junior Lessons," Pelton, would be useful.

YEAR IV.

STORIES FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

1. *The Ascension and After* (Acts i. 6-11).

(a) Still from S. Peter's point of view, picture the Twelve leaving Jerusalem with our Lord, and walking in the spring sunshine across the valley and up the Mount of Olives. (b) The disciples listen to the parting words. (c) "A cloud received Him out of their sight." (d) Great joy (Luke xxiv. 52-53). What had they to do? Could they begin at once? (Acts i. 8).

N.B.—What thoughts should be at the back of our minds when we teach this to the children? We want to guard against the idea that heaven is a far-away place. Gradually they will learn that it is where God is, outside space. As the life beyond the veil belongs to the spiritual order, it can only be described in terms of metaphor. "Christ was removed from the disciples' sight, but not from hearing of their prayers or from sympathy with their needs."* Behind the stories of the "Acts" is the Lord still working through and still guiding His Church (Acts i. 24). He is the invisible Head, though perhaps a child would find it easier to think of Him as the invisible Leader. The *mode* of His Ascension was the means taken by the Lord to express in an outward form the abiding truth that henceforth He would be accessible to His Church through the Spirit, His whole Being, body and spirit, had been gathered into the spiritual order.

2. *Waiting for the Gift* (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 12-14).

What had Jesus told the disciples about the Holy Spirit? (John xiv. 16-17, 26). "Comforter" = helpful friend, friend in need.† Cf. Emerson, "A friend is one who helps you to make the best of yourself."

* Furneaux.

† "Faith of the New Testament," p. 197.

Picture their eager waiting; how would the gift come? They met together and they prayed—others too (Acts i. 14). Children might suggest names—Mary, Jairus, etc.

3. *The Coming of the Gift* (Acts ii. 1-13).

Jerusalem is packed for the great feast of Pentecost; it is at nine in the morning when the Spirit is poured forth upon them. Pentecost (fifty), the second of the three great feasts (Deut. xvi. 9-16). To many Jews it had become only a popular holiday. (How many of our public holidays were holy days in the Middle Ages?)

The effect on the Apostles; they began to praise God.

The effect on the crowd that gathered:

(1) The religious recognize it as a manifestation of God's power.

(2) The holiday-makers say, "These men are drunk."

4. *S. Peter speaks to the Crowd* (Acts ii. 14-42).

Probably he spoke Greek, which everyone would understand. The meaning of the gift of tongues is obscure. "Ye men of Judæa, we are not drunk; these outward signs are what one of your old prophets—Joel—said would happen. We preach Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye knew and killed (ver. 22-23). He is alive, for we have seen Him (ver. 32). He is the Messiah" (ver. 36). S. Peter's hearers were sorely troubled. What could they do? "Repent and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

S. PETER (continued from Year III.).

1. *The Healing of the Lame Man* (Acts iii. 1-26).

This story can be introduced by our Lord's charge to the Twelve, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers . . . freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. x. 8); and at the end the children can be led to see that the best things we can give to others are those which money cannot buy. Give or gather from the children examples of care, kindness, willing service, etc., and show that no amount of money can purchase these.

2. *Imprisonment, and Appearance before the Sanhedrin*
(Acts. iv. 1-31).

The Sanhedrin consisted of about seventy members drawn from three classes—(a) rulers—*i.e.*, actual holders of office—the high-priests and their relatives; (b) elders or presbyters—*i.e.*, leading men of influence owing to birth, wealth, or religious dignity; (c) the chief rabbis or teachers.

This the Apostles' first collision with the authorities; *cf.* S. Peter now and at the high-priest's palace (Luke xxii. 54-62). What must they do? (Mark xiii. 11). Forbidden to preach, they return to their friends, and pray that they may speak the word of God with boldness.

3. *Second Imprisonment, Release, and Advice of Gamaliel*
(Acts v. 17-42).

(a) "We must obey God rather than man" (ver. 29).

(b) "Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name" (ver. 41). Why would S. Peter be especially glad?

N.B.—The release from prison was probably due to Divine action by natural means, such as help on the part of some official—"an angel of the Lord" being a picturesque Hebrew way of describing what we call Providence.

4. *A Description of the New Brotherhood.*

Its character : the members like one family (ii. 41-47).

(1) They loved each other and were very happy.

(2) They prayed together in the Temple.

(3) They met for the breaking of bread.

(4) They sold their goods and put the money into a common fund, so that none of the poorer brethren should be in want (iv. 32-35).

"The power of the common experience was so great that all material things were held in common."

Name of the brotherhood, the Church; *cf.* with child's idea of church (a building)—*e.g.*, the two meanings of school—the building and the people in it.

"It was the Spirit of Fellowship which was the secret of the miraculous spread of Christianity; it was infectious and

made it possible for people to believe the incredible Christian story more than all the 'signs and wonders' which the Apostles did."*

5. *S. Peter's Vision* (Acts x., xi. 1-18).

When this graphic story has been briefly told, the children might read it through, taking parts in different scenes; shorten some of the long speeches.

N.B.—Verse 2: "One that feared God" = believed in the Jewish religion and worshipped in the synagogue.

Verse 9: The house-top was the coolest and quietest place. Noon was one of the set times of prayer among the Jews (*cf.* Daniel).

After his visit to Samaria (viii.) Peter was probably perplexed. Did God really want people who were not Jews to be in His Church?

6. *S. Peter's Imprisonment* (Acts xii. 1-17).

This story could be told from the point of view of one of S. Peter's friends—*e.g.*, Rhoda.

7. *The Legend of his Martyrdom.*

"That both S. Paul and S. Peter were martyred at Rome, and both under Nero, has been in effect the constant tradition of the Church."† 1 Peter was probably written before the Neronian persecution. Let the children find the letter.

N.B.—The teacher might introduce the story thus: "There is nothing in the Bible about S. Peter's death, but an old legend has been told for hundreds of years, and may be true."

(a) *S. Peter goes to Rome to shepherd the Christians.*

Picture S. Peter in Rome; the wonderful city; many Christians, most of them poor slaves. We have one letter he wrote from there (1 Peter v. 12).

(b) *The Great Fire and Persecution.*

Outbreak of fire in poor part of the city; raging flames; many houses burnt; rumour that Emperor Nero had ordered

* A. C. Turner, "Challenge."

† "Faith of the New Testament," p. 118.

it. He lays the blame on the Christians: "No one knows why they meet together; they are making plots; they will not offer incense to the Emperor's image; perhaps they have started this fire."

Christians taken, some thrown to wild beasts, others crucified, beheaded, burnt. Those left say to S. Peter: "You must go away; you are our shepherd and must not be killed. When this awful time is over you can come back and care for those who are still here."

(c) *S. Peter's Flight, Vision, and Return.*

Picture S. Peter at first refusing, and then consenting, forgetting that his Master had said: "The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep." In the dark night he stole out of the city along the Appian Way; suddenly on the road shone a great glory. S. Peter saw Someone wearing a crown of thorns, and with wounds in His Hands and Feet. "Lord," he cried, "where are you going?"

The Lord looked at Peter, and answered: "I go to Rome to be crucified in your place."*

(d) *The Crown of Glory.*

S. Peter understood, and, turning, ran swiftly back to the city. When the Roman soldiers arrested him and prepared to crucify him, he said: "I am not worthy to die like my Lord; crucify me head downwards."

So S. Peter passed through the gate of death, and received from the "Great Shepherd" "the crown of glory that fadeth not away" (Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. v. 4).

Repetition.

Let the children look at S. Peter's first letter and choose a verse to learn.

S. STEPHEN (Acts vi., vii., viii. 1-3).

The Work.

N.B.—vi. 1: Hellenists=Grecian Jews—i.e., Jews resident abroad, or those who after living abroad settled in Palestine.

* M. Pelton (adapted), "Junior Lessons."

1. *What the Apostles would have to do* (vi. 1-4).
2. *Choice of the Seven—The Laying On of Hands—Their Work* (vi. 3-7).
3. *St. Stephen's Arrest and Trial before the Sanhedrin* (vi. 8-15, vii. 44-56).

"As the Temple stood in the days of Jesus (Herod's Temple) it was a most splendid building of very great size, situated on the summit and slopes of Mount Zion, and so richly gilded and adorned that it shone from afar like a mountain of gold. The most important part of it was the Sanctuary, which stood on the top of the hill and formed the glory and crown of the whole. It consisted of two chambers, the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place. Round it, each at a lower level, stood the several courts, the last and greatest of all being the court of the Gentiles. Round this sacred house gathered all the tenderest affections and highest hopes of the nation; to see it, to worship in its courts, the people came up from every part of the country three times a year, while myriads of the race, scattered all over the Roman Empire, undertook long, toilsome journeys to share these privileges. No other people has shown so tender, so passionate, so stubborn an attachment to a building. To it they believed, under Messiah's rule, all nations would come; it would be the meeting-place of the peoples, the one Temple of the whole earth."*

"This man is ever speaking against this holy place and the law . . ." (vi. 13). "He says that Jesus will come and destroy all this place . . . and he dares to say that He will change all the customs that Moses gave us" (ver. 14).†

4. *The Martyrdom* (vii. 57-60): *His Vision* (see p. 111).

"Fell asleep." "Beautiful as the expression is, it has been responsible for a serious misconception, for death is not a sleep, but the entry into a larger life."‡

* College S. Mt., p. 4.

† "Paul the Dauntless," p. 81.

‡ Furneaux, p. 101.

"A storm broke over the Church; in a few days the Apostles were the only Christians left in Jerusalem. . . . The scattered believers carried their message with them."*

S. PHILIP.

1. *Immediate Result of Trial and Death of S. Stephen* (Acts viii. 1-4).

(a) Persecution against the Church which was in Jerusalem.

(b) Flight to Judæa and Samaria of all the believers except the Apostles.

(c) "They that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word."

2. *Philip at Work in the City of Samaria* (Acts viii. 5-13).

(a) His message that the Messiah had appeared (ver. 5).

(b) His healing of the sick (ver. 6-7). "Multitudes gave heed when they heard and saw."

(c) He overcomes the power of Simon the fortune-teller (ver. 9-13).

3. *The Visit of the Apostles* (ver. 14-17, 25).

Picture their arrival. The laying on of hands.

4. *Philip and the Ethiopian* (ver. 26-39).

Ethiopia is a wide term covering the whole of Africa south of Egypt. A voice told him to go down towards Gaza. Why not to another big town? S. Philip did not know, but he went. Picture road, houses getting fewer, at last desert; walks south, suddenly hears chariot, sees a black man reading from a book (roll). What was it? The Ethiopian's surprise. Philip tells him about Jesus. The baptism. The joy.

N.B.—This story makes a good missionary lesson taken from the point of view of the Ethiopian, and is more suitable for younger children if taken in this way. (See Year II.)

* Armitage Robinson, "Ephesians," p. 4.

5. *Philip settles at Cæsarea* (ver. 40; see S. Luke, Year VII.).

“ Use of ‘ Angel ’ (ver. 26) and ‘ Spirit ’ (ver. 29) shows that what is meant is not only external appearance, but some inward communication. . . . The Jew ignored secondary causes, and attributed results to Divine intervention. To him it was a helpful and beautiful thought that the hand of God was seen in all the events of life; and he described His guidance, whether it took the shape of dreams or human agency or natural circumstances, as angelic ministry. We suffer grievous loss by understanding this beautiful imagery literally. Angels, we say, no longer appear to us. And so we ignore the presence of the Divine in common things and ordinary processes, and look for it only in the extraordinary and supernatural. We believe that the meeting between Philip and the eunuch was divinely brought about, but think that God leaves our meetings to a chapter of accidents.”*

S. PAUL.

See Year VII, starred stories to be omitted.

POLYCARP: A HERO OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

1. *His Early Life.*

Born probably about 65 A.D. Birthplace busy seaport of Smyrna. Christian Church there. As a boy became a follower of Jesus Christ. Picture visits of S. John then living at Ephesus, many eager hearers gathered round, amongst them Polycarp.

2. *Later Years.*

While still a young man made Bishop of Smyrna; saw many Emperors come and go; many heathen won by him to the faith. Picture him on hillside overlooking bay, with young pupils round him. Lived to be a hundred years old.

* Furneaux, p. 114.

3. *Persecution of the Christians.*

Outbreak in Asia Minor; many tortured, thrown to wild beasts. Polycarp in country betrayed, arrested, and taken to city; offered no resistance.

4. *Before the Governor.*

Friendly magistrate suggested, "Why not cast a few grains of incense upon the altar to Cæsar?" "Revile Jesus Christ, and I will set thee at liberty." "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He did me no wrong; how, then, can I speak evil of my King?" "Polycarp has confessed himself a Christian." "Let him be burned," cried the people.

5. *His Martyrdom.*

Wood and faggots collected. Polycarp bound to the stake. Flames leapt up, formed an arch round his body without touching him; a soldier plunged a dagger into his side, and Polycarp's brave spirit was with his Lord.*

We must never let death end a story, but carry the children's thoughts beyond. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 9).

Rep.: "My sheep hear My Voice,
 And I know them,
 And they follow Me.
 And I give unto them eternal life,
 And they shall never perish,
 And no one shall pluck them out of My hand."

STORIES ON PRAYER.

"The essence of prayer is intercourse with God."†

Introductory Lesson.—The picture of the Angelus.

A.—*What Prayer is.*

Speaking to God and listening when He speaks to us.

Bring out the joy of prayer by stories of people who loved to pray—e.g., S. Patrick.

* *T. and T.*, Sladen.

† Temple, "The Pilgrim."

(1) His home in Scotland; his father a Christian. Pirates seize him and carry him off to Ireland.

(2) Sold to a farmer to feed pigs; very miserable. Remembers stories of Jesus told by his mother. Begins to talk to Him; he has found a Friend, and is no longer unhappy.

"Daily there more and more did grow in me

The fear of God. . . . oft

In woods and on the mountains I've remained,
And risen to prayer e'er daylight broke, through snow,
Through frost, through rain, and yet I took no ill."

(3) The voice that told him, "Soon thou shalt see thy land and home again, for, behold, thy ship is ready." He set off to the sea. Taken round by France, but home at last.

(4) After some time a voice told him to return to Ireland and tell the Irish about Jesus. His work in Ireland—"So many past my counting" became Christians.

An ancient Irish hymn generally attributed to S. Patrick and known as S. Patrick's Breast-plate:

"I bind unto myself to-day

The power of God to hold and lead,

His eye to watch, His might to stay,

His ear to hearken to my need. . . .

Christ be with me, Christ within me,

Christ behind me, Christ before me,

Christ beside me, Christ to win me,

Christ to comfort and restore me,

Christ beneath me, Christ above me,

Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,

Christ in hearts of all that love me,

Christ in mouth of friend and stranger."

Samuel. Joan of Arc. S. Francis and S. Bernard.
S. Catherine of Siena.

B.—*What we Speak to Him About?*

1. We thank Him for the things which make us happy.

Story of the Ten Lepers (Luke xvii. 11-19).

Story of Cædmon. Rep. Ps. cvii. 8.

2. We tell Him if we have done wrong, and ask Him to forgive us.

Story of the Prodigal Son (Luke xv.).

Story of Onesimus (Philem.). Rep. 1 John i. 9.

3. We tell Him about other people.

Story of S. Peter's Wife's Mother (Mark i.).

N.B.—We cannot teach the children too early that God's will for us is that we should be well and happy. Also, we are learning how our minds affect our bodies, how thoughts of hope, joy, and love bring health and strength; thoughts of gloom and bitterness poison and weaken us. To hate anyone or to refuse to forgive must therefore harm us all through. People are finding out more and more that the prayer of faith can heal the sick now as of old.

Story of Monica and S. Augustine.

Anyone in whom the child is interested—missionaries, etc.

C.—*We pray to Him Together.*

Story of S. Peter in Prison, taken from the point of view of Rhoda (Acts xii.).

The First Whit-Sunday. Rep. Matt. xviii. 19-20.

D.—*We can Speak to Him Anywhere.*

Story of Nehemiah (Neh. i., ii.).

Story of Brother Lawrence.

S. Paul in Prison (Acts xvi.).

E.—*Answers to Prayer.*

Story of Hezekiah (2 Kings xix. 4-20, 32-37).

God answers all our prayers—e.g., a child invited to a picnic prayed for a fine day. It rained. Someone said: "God did not answer your prayer." "Yes, He did," said the child; "He said 'No.'"

We do not try to change God's will, but we tell Him what we want, and leave it to His love and wisdom to give

or to refuse. Failure to teach this is responsible for much bewilderment and agnosticism in later years.

F.—Duty of Prayer.

“Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”

Story of Daniel (Dan. vi.).

Sometimes we do not feel inclined to say our prayers, but Jesus will help us if we ask Him. “We learn to pray by praying.” “One who in this life has not learnt to pray must find himself an alien in that world where the fruition is the Vision of God.”*

Rep. Ps. v. 1-3, a Morning Prayer.

Ps. iv. 8, an Evening Prayer.

A child may write down a morning and evening prayer in his own words, or a prayer bearing on one of the lessons. Older children enjoy compiling their own book of prayers, illuminating and binding them.

N.B.—If it is thought desirable to give some teaching from the N.T. in Year V., the stories of S. Paul and those of Samuel, Saul, David, etc., could be transposed.

* Gore.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A

YEARS V.-VII

THE HISTORY OF THE HEBREWS.

BEFORE BIBLE TIMES.

The earliest civilized people of whom there is any record are found living by great rivers—*e.g.*, Euphrates, Nile, Tigris. We cannot tell how many years of development lie behind the civilization of the people of the Euphrates valley, but from contemporary documents (*e.g.*, clay tablets) we can study the religious history of these people, "this early chapter in the Divine Revelation."

Some time before 4000 B.C. a Mongolian race called the Accadians (*cf.* Gen. x. 10) inhabited the region of the Euphrates. They were not united, but lived in cities and formed a number of small states.

Soon after 4000 B.C. their country was invaded by the Semites, a nomad tribe, and about 3500 B.C. Sargon founded the first Semitic empire, and made the city of Accad his capital. The conquerors adopted the writing and the religious ideas of the Accadians, and it is from them that we get the Assyrian traditions of the Creation and the Flood.

From the first men believed in powers outside themselves with whom they could hold communication (prayer), and to whom they built temples and offered sacrifices (worship).

Three of the most famous peoples of the ancient world :

1. *The Chaldeans.*

(a) *Who They Were.*—A people who lived long ago in Asia, near a great river, the Euphrates (map), could make bricks and houses, and lived in cities, divided their time into seven days, taught themselves arithmetic and geo-

metry. Their oldest records date back as far as between 5000 and 4000 B.C.

Describe cuneiform writing, and the libraries of clay tablets.

(b) *Their Religion*.—They did not realize there was only one God; they imagined that there were many gods—e.g., the Sun God, who made the harvest flourish; the Moon God, who guided their caravan across the desert by night; those who lived near the sea (Persian Gulf) worshipped the Sea God, and each city state had a different god.

(c) *Their Laws*.—When they became united into one nation, laws were needed to regulate transactions with each other.

Give the story of the wonderful King Hammurabi, about 2500 B.C., who compiled a code. A tablet has been dug up on which is drawn a picture of the Sun God giving the laws of Hammurabi, also tablets on which are written their ideas of how the world was made, called Creation tablets.* (Pictures to be shown.)

2. *The Egyptians.*

(a) *Who They Were*.—About the same time arose another people who lived in Africa by another great river (map). Wonderful builders and painters.

Describe and draw the Sphinx, the pyramid. (Thousands of men employed for twenty years to build one pyramid.) They wrote on papyrus (made from reeds growing by the River Nile), not on clay like the Babylonians, and were not, like them, interested in laws.

(b) *Their Religion*.—They too worshipped many gods and felt they could speak to them. Prayers written on papyrus are extant. But what interested them most was what happened when the soul left this world; they were quite sure that it did not die and that there was another world; also that the other life somehow depended on how a man lived here. The mummies and pyramids were the expression of these ideas. Pictures have been found of

* "Early Story of Israel" (Longmans).

the gods weighing a man's heart before he was permitted to enter the doors of the next world.* Give the story of Aknaton.

The religions of Babylonia and Egypt ceased to grow—that is, the people did not seem able to understand any new or higher thoughts about God, and no other great king arose after Hammurabi.†

“Always was God ready to reveal, but He could not do so until man could understand. Revelation or discovery is neither in God's giving or man's receiving, but in the two together.”

Truth is always there, but it is only gradually recognized—e.g., only in the nineteenth century have men learnt to use electricity. “Every truth is new that moment when anyone sees it to be true.”

3. *The Hebrews.*

(a) *Who They Were.*—From Arabia and Babylonia came another tribe of people who crossed the river (cf. Joshua xxiv. 2, 3), and came by slow stages into the land of Canaan. Let the children notice that the land of the Hebrews lay between the great empires of Assyria and Egypt, the great trade route (cf. Gen. xxxvii. 28), which had a sea outlet in Phœnicia, crossing the plain of Esdraelon (see map).

“The sons of Israel were an offshoot from a Semitic race which was found in the dawn of history planted somewhere in North Arabia.”

(b) *What Were They Like?*—They were shepherds, and had flocks and herds. Draw out the children's knowledge of the characteristics and appearances of the Jews.

(c) *Their Religion.*—They brought with them from their home in Arabia many of the Chaldean ideas and stories of how the world was made; the offering of sacrifices, even of their children (e.g., the offering of Isaac). But to some individuals of the nation came the wonderful, new idea that they must worship one God only—Jehovah

* “Early Story of Israel” (Longmans).

† “Period of the Patriarchs,” pp. 31, 32.

or Yahweh. They came to believe that this God was a good God, and that He wanted more from them than sacrifices; that He expected His people to be good too.

At first they thought that other nations were under the care of other gods—*e.g.*, a war between the Israelites and the Philistines was a war between Jehovah and Dagon, and only slowly did their best men realize that there *were* no other gods.

Give illustration of this. Not "There is no other god but Me," but "*Thou* shalt have no other god but Me."

The bulk of the nation in O.T. times never learnt the further truth that Jehovah cared not for them only, but for all the nations of the earth.

It would be well to arouse a feeling of interest and expectation in the minds of the children at the thought that in the O.T. they are going to hear the stories of how this nation gradually came to know more and more about God.

THE STORY OF MOSES.

"The great body of O.T. scholars believe that the real history of the nation and its religion begins with the work of this great leader. . . . We are compelled to view him through the varied traditions that gathered round his name in the course of several centuries, but men rightly look back to this as a great hour. Prophets and priests idealized it, each from their own standpoint, and the belief that this was an hour of new revelation was never lost."*

"To Moses was granted not only (1) an inspiration to adopt Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as the God of the people of Israel, but also (2) a revelation of the meaning of this personal name of the God of the Patriarchs, and (3) a wondrous revelation of His character. Henceforth Jehovah is to be the God of Israel; He alone is to be worshipped by Israel."†

"A sound historical judgment will conclude that the traditions have a firm foothold in real events. But since

* Peake (adapted), p. 84.

† Redlich (adapted), p. 83.

not less than four centuries intervened between the events and the earliest of our sources, it is not to be expected that the details of the narratives can all be equally correct. And there are not only literary distinctions between the sources, but differing and, in some points, contradictory representations of matters of fact."*

"It is not precisely known in what year the Hebrews left Egypt, but it probably happened not less than 3,150 years ago. The stories which tell of it (parts of which have been preserved to us in the Bible) were written down about 500 years after the event, and some of them even later. It is as if nothing had been written down about the Battle of Hastings till the reign of Queen Elizabeth. We should not in that case know about that great battle as clearly and certainly as we do now. Or supposing nothing had been written down about the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and nothing were to be written for another 200 years, what different accounts of it would be in existence, and how many varying versions (none, probably, very clear or full) could be pieced together about it when men came to make a written account on the basis of their oral traditions in the year 2088."†

"Moses had a real message from the Eternal God, whose highest messenger always appears in the lowly form of a servant."

1. *The Oppression* (Exod. i. 8-14).

At this age it might be well to begin with the time when Moses suddenly realized that he belonged to the oppressed people and wanted to help them. "Try to imagine their lives—living in one community, probably in mud huts, paid with a meagre supply of food, guarded by task-masters and soldiers, knowing that at the frontier, beyond which lay the desert and freedom, were Egyptian fortresses."‡

2. *His Attempt to Help and its Failure* (Exod. ii. 11-15; Acts vii. 23-29).

* Peake.

† Montefiore, p. 61.

‡ Melville Harris, *T. and T.*

3. *Obliged to fly for his Life.*

Picture Moses fleeing alone out into the wild desert country—the loneliness, perhaps fear.

4. *In Midian.*

Describe him settled down as a shepherd in the lonely desert (contrast his life in the Egyptian palace), learning patience, hardness, and self-reliance; how often would he think about his people, and his failure to help them; he is learning to know Someone else. Who? The writer to the Hebrews tells us that Moses “endured as seeing Him who is invisible.”

Some think Moses went into Babylonia at this time, and there learnt about their gods. (Their ideas more spiritual than those of the Egyptians.)

We must picture here the calm of a desert life taking possession of Moses’ soul, and making him “practise the presence of God” as he never could have done in an Egyptian Court. *

Years passed (forty = a round number) and at last the call came. We do not know quite what happened, but this is how the story was told to the Israelites hundreds of years ago.

5. *The Burning Bush* (Exod. ii. 23-25, iii., iv. 1-17; cf. calls of other men).

“Some sensible manifestation of the Divine; fire is always taken to be a symbol of the Divine Presence”;† or, “the spreading acacia, with its glowing orange-coloured wood, its grey foliage, and its masses of white blossom glistening beneath the desert sun, may have seemed to have been a celestial presence.”

Moses knew he must go back—Rameses was dead; Merenptah was reigning (1300 B.C.). There was no reason why he should not return. He realized (1) that God cared for His people and knew their sorrow, (2) that it was He who would give him power to help them.

* Peake.

† Peake, pp. 168-171

"The form the story takes must be regarded in the light of Eastern imagery." The struggle that went on in the mind of Moses is thrown into the form of a conversation.

iii. 11 : He thought of the greatness of the work, and felt he would not be able to do it. "A fugitive, a shepherd, and unknown, how shall he interview Pharaoh or lead Israel?"*

Ver. 13, 14 : "Who shall I say has sent me?" He did not feel he knew enough about God to make the people feel He cared for them and was going to help them. Then came to Moses a new knowledge, a clearer understanding of what God was : "I will be what I will be." "No one can limit the inexhaustibly fresh possibilities of One so named ; He will be to us far more than we can imagine."†

N.B.—"Moses was sent to his great work of forming a nation and starting them on their career with the Divine message ringing in their ears : 'Trust Me, and you will see what I will do for you.'‡ The nation was bidden to look forward expecting that God would more and more reveal Himself."

Slowness of Speech. Moses now feels his difficulty in speaking ; the thought of Aaron comes into his mind (read iv. 10-15, 18-23, 27-31). That was the last day with the sheep—then the good-byes, the journey, and glad meeting with Aaron. Picture the two going on together. Of what would they talk? How could they rouse the spirit of the people? (See *T. and T.*, Wallis.)

6. *How the People were Freed* (Exod. viii.-xiv.).

Picture a rumour spreading amongst the people of the arrival of Moses, and then the news that he had been to Pharaoh and demanded that they should be released.

N.B.—We have been accustomed to think of the plagues as signs of God's wrath, but nowadays we do not believe that God sends calamities to punish ; cf. our Lord's teaching : "Were they sinners on whom the tower of Siloam fell?" Pharaoh and the Egyptians were frightened by these catastrophes and connected them with the God of

* Peake, pp. 168-171.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Storr (adapted).

the Hebrews ; and so evidently did the Hebrew writer who in after-years wrote down the story.

Much light has been thrown on the truth of these old stories by a book written by a practical engineer and irrigation expert in Mesopotamia.* In the preface Professor Sayce says that to anyone who has lived in Egypt the evidence is convincing, and the author shows that the plagues would happen to-day if there were a combination of external troubles and low Niles. Equally interesting is his explanation of the reason why certain plagues did not affect the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived ; this is described in Genesis as the best of the land, the only part of the low-lying eastern Delta which has sweet subsoil water. (See Year II. for Nile.)

This particular year there might have been a low Nile, and in that case very little overflow would find its way to the Delta. To conserve the water in the canals for the outlying country it was the custom to close them by damming them across ; the supply of fresh water was thus stopped ; the salt water travelled farther than usual, and in consequence thousands of fish died, while the frogs strayed on to the land, which was dry and parched. They swarmed into the houses seeking water, and died for the lack of it, and then followed a plague of flies breeding on the dead frogs. The murrain of cattle came from the drinking of filthy, contaminated water ; the boils probably from the same reason and from long-continued absence of green food.

The hail (in January) was probably not connected with the other plagues, and is rare in that part, but has been known to fall ; locusts are a spring visitation. The darkness might be caused by a north-west wind blowing hard for three days and filling the air with salt-laden dust which completely blots out the sunlight. The heavy infant mortality was the natural consequence of drinking polluted water for many months, while the Israelites, who were all congregated in the land of Goshen with its fresh-water

* Willcocks, " From the Garden of Eden to the Crossing of the Jordan."

springs, would escape. These calamities gave Moses the opportunity which he was quick to take.

7. *The Passover.* (See Year II.)

The Passover was the spring festival at which firstlings and lambs were sacrificed; connected with it seems to have been a feast of unleavened cakes, probably an agricultural festival to mark the beginning of barley harvest. It was held as a thanksgiving on the night of the Israelites' departure from Egypt, and was ever after connected with their deliverance and became their greatest festival. This is how the story was told in after years; read Exod. xii. 1-28.

8. *Pillar of Cloud and Fire* (xiii. 20-22). (See Year II.)

9. *Crossing of the Red Sea* (xiv.).

The Egyptians had the same word for sea and river, and many think that the Red Sea is really a reedy branch of the Nile, the Serbonian bog, "a lake of very narrow width, but of great depth, and about twenty miles long . . . its basin being very narrow, like a riband, and surrounded on all sides by great banks of sand; when east winds blow for some time a great quantity of sand is drifted over it. This hides the water and confuses the appearance of the lake with the dry land, so that they are indistinguishable. From which cause many have been swallowed up with their whole armies."*

Milton has a reference to this in "Paradise Lost." The statement that God took off the chariot-wheels of the Egyptians confirms the fact that the Egyptians floundered in the muddy bed of the river.

Moses probably thought out his route well; the most dramatic event in the whole story is the turning back of the Israelites in the face of the Egyptians, before the destruction of Pharaoh's host (xiv. 19). Moses put Pharaoh off his guard by removing the braziers from the head of the caravan to its tail; all this showed great generalship. Pharaoh thought the Israelites were undecided what to do.

* Willcocks, p. 67.

10. *Life in the Desert.* (See p. 16.)

The duration of the wanderings is quite uncertain. Point out the difficulties of Moses' work. Discuss the character which slavery produces :

- (a) Always grumbling ; " nothing but their food interested them."
- (b) Without initiative, without any idea of work for its own sake, or of doing things unless they were obliged.

11. *Mount Sinai* (xix.). (The site is quite uncertain.)

" The event which was of central importance in Israelite history was itself religious. Realizing its importance, tradition surrounded it with clouds and darkness. Moses led the mixed band of loosely connected tribes to the mountain abode of Yahweh, whom his family and the Kenites worshipped. Into that worship Moses admitted them as a body (not only the fugitives from Egypt, but probably also some tribes who had not been there, and who had settled in the neighbourhood of Kadesh), thereby uniting them by the strongest of bonds."

He caused them all to enter into a solemn covenant with Yahweh and no other god, and the covenant was sealed by sacrificial feast. This event, by which Israel was for the first time drawn into a real inner unity, was so epoch-making that ever afterwards the laws and customs were attributed to Moses. There are three versions of the ten laws.

Moses is now probably back in the place where God had formerly seemed so near, and had spoken to him (Exod. iii. 12). Many difficulties face him—the incessant demands of the people ; their grumbings ; the need of laws for their guidance ; their little knowledge of God, who was so much to Moses. The mountains, their summits hidden in the clouds, were a strange sight to those brought up in the far-stretching land of Egypt, under the cloudless blue of an Egyptian sky. We may picture a fearful thunder-storm and Moses is not with them ; he is away alone with God. Forty days and forty nights pass, and at last he

is seen returning; the old story says that his face shone (xxxiv. 29-35).

Discuss "expression" with children, and bring out that a child who is continually looking cross gets a "gloomy" expression, and a happy child gets a "sunny" expression. So the effect of wonderful thoughts of God and talking with (*i.e.*, praying to) Him for a long time showed in Moses' face when he came down. "The soul shows through the body."

12. *The Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting* (xxxiii. 7-11).

This was apparently a simple, nomad tent of goat's hair, and was pitched at a little distance outside the camp, as within its outer walls was kept burning a fire smoking by day and bright by night. Thither Moses went to meet with God, and the people to receive from him the Divine teaching which he, as Jehovah's prophet, stood ready to give. The details of the tabernacle are put in by a later writer, and probably coloured by the glory of Solomon's Temple.

13. *The Ark* (xxv.).

The Hebrews were not to remain in the wilderness near the holy mountain where God dwelt; they had to go to another land; must they leave their God in His dwelling-place? So Moses commanded that an ark (a box of wood) should be made which could be carried with them through the long journey, and that it should be called the Ark of Yahweh, the symbol to them of the presence of God, the throne of the God of Sinai. There is no description of it in the earliest narrative.

14. *The Death of Moses* (Deut. xxxi. 1-8, xxxii. 48-52, xxxiv. 1-10).

The old story that Moses and Aaron were forbidden to enter the Promised Land because of one failure in patience does not agree with our conception of the character of God as revealed in Jesus Christ; rather we would picture to the children the time coming when Moses felt a younger man must take up the work. He calls Joshua, lays his hands

upon him, and then with him goes up to the top of the ridge from whence he could see the Promised Land. It lay stretched out before him, the blue waters of the Dead Sea half hidden in hanging mists, below, in the plain, the city of Jericho, with its high walls; straight ahead the mountains of Canaan stretching right and left as far as the eye could see until they seemed to meet the eastern range of Ammon; and far to the north the snowy crest of Hermon. As Moses looked on this we imagine that God called him, and he passed over to the other side to see face to face the Friend who had been with him all his journey through.

Joshua goes down to the people and tells them their leader is gone; they mourn and wonder what they will do without him. On the sloping banks of the glen they buried him, and there for another month they remained. Later it became impossible to identify the place of burial.

"Between the streams that in these valley bottoms spring full-born from the rocks, and the cornfields on the plateau above, there are some thousands of feet of slopes and gullies, where no foot comes; the rock is crumbling, and utter silence reigns, save for the wind moaning through the thistles. Here Moses was laid. Who would wish to know the exact spot? The whole region is a sepulchre.*

The Character of Moses.

The children may build up the character of Moses from reviewing the stories about him, incidentally finding out the qualities which make a leader. Even if the stories are legendary, they show the character of the man as he appeared to his contemporaries.

1. *Sympathy*.—Moses felt for his oppressed brethren and tried to help them (Exod. ii. 11).

2. *Courage*.—His appearances before Pharaoh.

3. *Readiness to Delegate Authority*.—See the story of Jethro (Exod. xviii.). A good leader does not try to do everything himself. He chooses the right men to help him, and gives them responsibility.

* G. A. Smith, p. 565.

4. *Self-Sacrifice*.—See the story of the Golden Calf (Exod. xxxii.). This also brings out his force of character; contrast it with Aaron, who shirked his responsibility: "There came out this calf."

5. *Patience*.—Moses must have had this; if not, his one failure would not have been emphasized (Num. xx.).

The true leader must also have a sense of vocation—be called by God. "The sense of vocation is the deepest secret of the lives of the greatest leaders, early and late. The call of a need and the call of a crowd are both inspiring, but it is not until there is added to them, or heard through them, the call of God that the leader is fully equipped to achieve."

It was said of Moses, "He knew God face to face." What does this imply?

JOSHUA.

The Greek form of the name is Jesus. See Year II., p. 18, and give the first four lessons if desired.

The Hebrews did not pour into Canaan as a mighty undivided host, and sweep away all its inhabitants. They secured only a foothold in the land under Joshua, and had to settle down with nations which were for the most part stronger than they. The Canaanites, Moabites, Ammonites, the Philistines and Phœnicians, had possession of the strip of land nearest the sea, whilst the former, with strong fortress towns, had secured the richest inland plain of the Kishon. These nations were highly civilized; they were great traders and had a coinage; they had a wonderful navy, and understood pottery and painting. From them the Israelites learnt agriculture, and to live, not in tents, but in villages and towns. They learnt other things too—to worship their gods, Chemosh and Baal, and to follow their cruel, savage customs (*e.g.*, Judg. xi. 31; 2 Kings xxiii.).

N.B.—In taking the settlement in Canaan with a class, the teacher should constantly remind the pupils that the Israelites were only slowly learning to know God, and that at this stage they were like small children, with very inade-

quate ideas of right and wrong. The pupils should never think that God willed the massacres of women and children, etc. Whatever conflicts with our knowledge of God's character as revealed in Jesus Christ must be due to man's imperfect understanding.

THE JUDGES.

The Judges were heroes, tribal chiefs, strong, rough men who believed in Jehovah, and felt that the constant distress and misery of the Israelites were caused by forgetfulness of Him (Judg. ii. 11-18). Round these men gathered stories, some authentic, some probably legendary (*cf.* William Tell, etc.). This oppression from the surrounding nations helped to weld the people from a loose agglomeration of tribes into some semblance of a nation.

DEBORAH. (Judg. iv. and v.)

The Situation.—(a) The highways deserted. Women shot at with arrows as they went to draw water. No weapon to be found in the land (Judg. v. 6-8). (b) Men lost heart. It was left for a woman to rouse the tribes. (*Cf.* Joan of Arc.)

There was a thunder or hail storm. The battlefield, the plain of Esdraelon, became a bog in which the chariots of iron stuck fast; the River Kishon—a torrent (ver. 21). See map showing physical features.

Jael and Sisera. The war-song. This is the most ancient poem in Hebrew literature, and bears every mark of being a contemporary document. It should be read to or by the class, but should not be learnt by heart.

The Hebrews thought of Jehovah as their God only; therefore their enemies were His enemies, and cruelty, treachery, and massacre were applauded in the interests of false patriotism.

THE STORY OF SAMUEL.

The Israelitish occupation of Canaan was a long, slow process, which was not complete until the time of David.

We can fix no date to the Book of Samuel ; the Israelites are still fighting and oppressed by the surrounding nations, especially the Philistines.

The Ark, which used to be carried before them when they were a wandering people, is now at Shiloh, a little city on the side of a hill ($9\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of Bethel). The Temple was probably a rough stone building with a goat-skin roof ; round it were the rooms where the priests lived. There the people came to bring gifts for sacrifices, to worship their God, and when in difficulty to ask what to do ; there they found Eli, the old priest, and his two sons of evil repute.

" There came a day when those who had journeyed to the Holy Place found there a boy serving Eli. Something about him—a courtesy, kindness, and helpfulness—made people like him at once."

Who was the boy, and how did he come there? Recall or let the children tell the story of Hannah, including the yearly festival at Shiloh, a social gathering.

Picture Samuel's work, helping Eli, who was becoming blind, cleaning and sweeping, lighting the lamp every evening at sunset, and extinguishing it at dawn. Years pass ; we may think of him as a growing, active boy,* loving the old man, to whom he was as a son, but hating the wickedness and dishonesty of Hophni and Phinehas, and gradually becoming aware of the harm this was doing in keeping people away from the Sanctuary. He himself must have had a struggle to keep straight, for they would doubtless use all their influence to lead him to do wrong, and would laugh at his scruples. The people who came were sent away without guidance or help.

" For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Lord at his mouth : for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts " (Mal. ii. 7).

Samuel did not yet " know God " as Moses and Joshua had done, whose stories he knew so well ; he only knew *about* Him. Let the children realize the difference ; he did wish he could hear God speaking.

* The Hebrew word " child " may mean any age up to forty.

How He Heard.—Let the children tell, or read to them, the well-known story. “. . . do not tell your pupils too much; rather let them hear, as you read, the words which men of old said to their God, and what they believed God said to them, because that is what you find in the Bible. Let them be seized by the amazing fact that conversation was held. The book is in your hands; read it as well as you can with detachment, not stressing, not emphasizing, and not too much explaining. Then, again, they will be witnesses; they will hear, or rather they will overhear, this utterance exchanged between man and God.”*

Why could Samuel hear? Let the children talk it out.

1. Because he wanted to hear; he was listening.
2. Because, in spite of many temptations, he had kept his hands clean and his heart pure. Draw from the children the thought that God's choice of messengers to-day is still the same; “He still speaks to the people who have pure hearts and clean hands, and sends them forth to save their country and the world.”†

Afterwards.—“And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him . . . all Israel knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord” (1 Sam. iii. 19-21). “Prophet” = one who speaks for God and to whom God speaks.

Note.—Different ideas in this story will appeal to different ages; for early adolescence, when some of the children may have a spiritual experience which will make them understand it, when God has become suddenly real, it could be taken as an isolated story.

Repetition.

Ps. xv. 1-3.

“Hushed was the evening hymn.”

See “Junior Lessons,” p. 78, M. Pelton.

* E. T. Campagnac, “Religion and Religious Teaching.”

† *T. and T.*, May, 1921, M. Butler.

SAUL.

"What is of intense interest in the Book of Samuel is that we are dealing with some of the oldest narratives in the O.T., and that most of the stories of Saul and David were written within a hundred years of the events."*

Amongst the stories of this period which have come down to us are conflicting accounts of the same events. After the Exile many of the Hebrews believed their trouble arose largely through their having chosen earthly monarchs in the place of God. "There are two views of the monarchy which are represented in the Bible. The older view, which is also probably the more historical, regards the monarchy as a great step in advance. And so in truth it was. . . . For a short period all the tribes felt themselves members of a single nation, and the King was a symbol of the national unity. To the older view the monarchy was a sign of Divine favour, and established by the will of God. The later, less historic, view regarded the monarchy as an act of rebellion against God."†

1. *Saul Chosen* (1 Sam. ix. and x.).

N.B.—"A High Place" was the top of a hill which was dedicated to worship, and where sacrifices were offered. The Israelites adopted the custom from the Canaanites.

2. *Saul's Battles.*

(1) Against the Ammonites (1 Sam. xi.).

(a) The Ammonites' Cruelty.

(b) Saul's Fiery Message.

(c) The Victory.

(2) Against the Philistines (1 Sam. xiii. 1-6). Compare the defenceless state of the Israelites with the armed forces of the Philistines. They "sore oppressed" the Israelites all Saul's life; from them Palestine takes its name.

3. *Jonathan's Exploit* (1 Sam. xiv. 1-23).

* Graveson, "United Monarchy" (adapted).

† Montefiore.

4. *Saul's Warning and Final Rejection* (1 Sam. xiii. 7-14, xv.).

Repetition.

1 Sam. xv. 22.

The teacher might read parts of Browning's "Saul" to the class.

Points to be Brought Out.

(1) How much good there was in Saul, and what a splendid start he had.

(2) That he did not really know God, or wish to do His will; he loved his own way, was wilful. The feelings of jealousy and evil temper, to which he gave way more and more, led at last to partial insanity. Let the children feel the disappointment of Samuel, who had expected so much from Saul.

DAVID. (See Year II.)

(Many of these stories are easily dramatized by children.)

1. *How he came under Saul's Notice.*

Different traditions. Either through his musical gifts (1 Sam. xvi. 14-23) or through the Goliath episode (1 Sam. xvii.).

2. *His Friendship with Jonathan.*

(a) The Two Friends (1 Sam. xviii. 1-5; Prov. xvii. 17).

(b) The King's Jealousy aroused (1 Sam. xviii. 6-17).

Let the children note Jonathan's difficult position as the heir to the throne. Could he be both loyal to his father, who was plainly going mad, and true to his friend, who, as he saw, was the "hope of the nation"?

(c) An Attempt to put Things Right (xix. 1-7).

(d) David an Outlaw (xx.).

(e) The Parting.

3. *The Outlaw Days* (cf. Robin Hood).

Hiding in a Cave (1 Sam. xxii. 1-5). Saul's Vengeance on David's Friends (1 Sam. xxii. 6-23).

David spares Saul's Life—(a) Cave of En-gedi (1 Sam. xxiv.).

To forgive injuries and to make friends is nobler than to pay people out. Saul's better feelings roused, but only temporarily.

(b) In Saul's Camp (xxvi.). "What more thrilling episode do we find in romance than that night walk of David and his cousin Abishai across the Wilderness of Ziph to prove to Saul, asleep in his tent, that, though in David's power, he was safe?"*

4. *How David became King.*

On his return from a raid he is met by an Amalekite with tidings of Saul's death (1 Sam. xxxi. ; 2 Sam. i.). Note the double tradition. David's lament (2 Sam. i. 17-27). "One of the primitive source writers found it in the national song-book, the Book of Jasher." To be read by the teacher ; parts may be learnt by the class.

5. *David establishes the Kingdom.*

He is made King, first of Judah only, and on the death of Saul's son of all the tribes.

(a) The capital, the first essential of a strong kingdom (2 Sam. v. 4-10). Jebuz, a walled city built on a hill with steep cliffs on three sides ; protected as if by a moat, except where one narrow neck of high land connected the city with the surrounding country. The position was so impregnable that the Jebusites manned the walls with cripples. David first stormed the protecting fort, Zion, and then climbed the walls and took the town (*cf.* Wolfe at Quebec).

(b) Bringing up the Ark (2 Sam. vi. 1-17). The nation was to be united by a religious as well as a civil bond. Therefore Jerusalem, the military stronghold and rallying-point, was to be the centre of worship, and the Ark, the symbol of God's presence, was brought to Jerusalem. David desires to build a Temple, but is only allowed to make preparations (1 Chron. xxii. 1-16 ; learn 1 Chron. xxix. 11-14).

(c) *Mephibosheth* (2 Sam. iv. 4).

* Houghton, p. 242.

6. *David's Sin* (2 Sam. xii. 1-23).

David, in contrast with Saul, was a man after God's own heart—i.e., he really wanted to do God's will, but he fell under temptation.

(a) David saw a beautiful woman and wanted to make her his wife, and so arranged that her husband should be killed.

(b) The news comes to the prophet Nathan, who feels he must rebuke the King. Let Nathan's story be read to the class.

(c) David's repentance, forgiveness, punishment. Let the children choose a verse to learn from Ps. xxxii.

7. *Absalom* (2 Sam. xv. 1-6, 10-37).

(a) Character : handsome, popular, wanted the kingdom for himself.

(b) David obliged to leave Jerusalem ; his friends desert him.

(c) David's victory. Absalom's death and David's bitter grief (xviii.).

8. *David's Character.*

Let the children discuss the character of David, as to whether they consider him good or bad. Lead them to see that he was a great leader in an uncivilized age, idealized later as a national hero ; with many faults, but possessing very lovable qualities and much personal charm. Note his sorrow when he had done wrong, and his readiness to own it and to bear the punishment.

"A lack of absolute truthfulness ; a failure in the face of sudden and powerful temptation to control his passions ; a selfish fondness for his own children which makes him a weak father."*

Saul loved him at first sight ; Jonathan loved him ; his three mighty men were ready to risk their lives for him (1 Chron. xi. 19).

* Kent.

SOLOMON.

1. *His Kingdom.*

(a) Extent. Egypt to Euphrates (see map).

(b) Government. It was despotic. Every detail of government passed through the King's hands—*e.g.*, he was not only King, but judge of all, and sat in the gates.

2. *His Wisdom.*

Story of Dream at Gibeon (1 Kings iii. 4-15).

Two sorts of Wisdom :

(a) Knowledge of human nature (iii. 16-28).

(b) Proverbs, riddles, etc. (iv. 29-34, *cf.* Prov. vi.).

“Even as David became the ideal singer, so Solomon became the ideal sage, and just as psalms, when collected, were ascribed to David, so proverbs, when collected, were ascribed to Solomon.”*

3. *The Temple.*

How it was built (1 Kings v.). Hiram was a great King of Phœnicia, the great trading nation, and the first to build ships and have colonies. Phœnicia had no corn, but had magnificent forests of cedar-trees and very skilled, artistic workmen. They carried their carved cedar and ivory all over the world, exchanging them in Britain for tin; in India, Arabia, and South Africa for spices and ivory; and in Palestine for corn and oil. Limestone was produced from Judæan quarries. All unskilled work was done by forced labour, the Israelites being taken from their crops. The skilled work was done by Phœnicians (see 1 Kings vi. 7).

The description of the Temple and the prayer of dedication given in Kings and Chronicles is the work of writers after the Exile, and is much coloured by their higher ideals of the majesty of God.

A rough model or ground-plan may be made by the children; details of dimensions, etc., should not be stressed.

* Montefiore, p. 281.

Outside, apparently, it looked like a stone building with little rooms round for the priests. The walls were lined with sweet-smelling cedar-wood, carved and overlaid with gold (vi. 14-18). It had two rooms—(1) The Holy of Holies, or the Oracle, containing an ark in which were kept the stone tablets, etc.; (2) the Holy Place, or the House (vii. 48-50), containing the altar, on which incense was burned (a symbol of prayer), and the golden table, on which twelve loaves were set weekly, to show that all food came from God. It was lighted by beautiful golden candlesticks. In the porch were two pillars (vii. 15-22).

There were two courts—(1) the small court enclosing the big altar, where animals were sacrificed, and the brass laver where the priests washed. Here the worshippers stood during the sacrifices. (2) The large outside court planted with trees.

4. *Dedication of the Temple* (1 Kings viii.).

(1) Picture the Ark and everything being brought up the Temple hill and put in their right places, all holy—*i.e.*, set apart.

(2) The service—Solomon's sermon and prayer. Read parts of it aloud to the class and notice the refrain.

5. "*Solomon in all his Glory.*" See comment in Luke xii. 27 (suitable for Repetition).

The beginning of Israel as a trading nation—merchant service established (1 Kings ix. 26-28). "Israelitish caravans traversed the Eastern desert, followed the trade routes which led southwards into Egypt; merchant ships of Solomon carried wares of Palestine to ports of Arabia, India, and possibly Spain." The great trade route from Assyria and Syria to Egypt lay through Palestine. This gave Palestine a commercial and strategic importance which was largely the cause of later invasions.

Buildings. Temple. Palaces (vii. 1-12). Forts (xi. 27).

6. *Great Discontent.*

Heavy taxation and forced labour hated by agricultural people.

Foreign wives worshipped foreign gods.

Northern tribes jealous of favours shown to Judah.

Foreign enemies—(1) Successful revolt of Edom (xi. 14-22); (2) rise of new independent kingdom at Damascus under Rezon, "an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon" (xi. 23-25).

A leader found in the person of Jeroboam, an overseer and clever young workman (xi. 26-43).

7. *Division of Kingdom on Solomon's Death.*

Story of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and his two sets of counsellors.

Let children discuss feelings of a youthful King; cf. Solomon and Queen Victoria (1 Kings xii.).

From this time onwards the children must be reminded that there were two kingdoms—

Judah, the southern kingdom, about the size of Cornwall, with its capital Jerusalem (see map for boundaries). Note its isolation—the Dead Sea and the desert on two sides of it.

Israel, the northern kingdom, not as large as Yorkshire; fertile, and on the direct route between Damascus and Egypt.

Israel was much more in touch with foreign nations, so that the religious ideas of the people became more mixed up with those of their neighbours; while the security of Judah lay in her political insignificance and her religious supremacy. Let children notice that small mountainous countries often retain their independence—e.g., Switzerland, Wales.

Israel is now wholly absorbed in foreign wars with Syria and Judah and internal conspiracies until the House of Omri founded a capital at Samaria (1 Kings xvi. 24) and established itself firmly upon the throne.

The political details of both kingdoms are quite unimportant. The great heroes of the race are henceforth to be found among the prophets. They are the poets, teachers, and statesmen of the age.

THE PROPHETS.

"The prophet's power is not in predictions of the future, though he may adventure some; nor in visions of another world, if he have any, but in vivid understanding of his age. Insight is his work, not foresight, though marvellous foresight may come of true insight. His aim is to see the world of his own time as God sees it. God's words are what he strives to speak, and therefore he must needs begin, 'Thus saith the Lord.' It is the insight natural to a pure heart and a truthful mind, and there is no reason why we in our measure should not share the gift with them of old."*

Books to Read.

G. A. Smith, "The Book of the Twelve Prophets."

"Isaiah."

Graveson, "The Kingdom of Israel."

Nairne, "Faith of the Old Testament."

Tatham, "Footprints in the Snow."

Robertson-Smith, "The Prophets of Israel."

Gillie, "God's Lantern Bearers."

ELIJAH.

It is an arresting story to give the children, because there is so much dramatic incident which appeals to them. On the other hand, it has special difficulties for the teachers because it is so full of the miraculous, and the children may ask if such a thing is true. The answer may have to be, "We don't know," because——

(1) Elijah's courage was so great and made such an impression that numerous legends would grow up around his life, as they have done around the lives of all other great men. "Legends always lie in the track of genius."†

(2) The greater the man, the less we can say with certainty that such a thing cannot be true. The fire which consumed Elijah's sacrifice may have been due to lightning, or to naphtha, which was normally used to kindle fire, or it may not. In the light of recent research we should hesitate

* Gwatkin, "The Knowledge of God," i. p. 173.

† Graveson, p. 27.

to put any limit to the power of the spirit to control things material. "The spiritual is the natural, and what is most natural is most spiritual."* (See also Jas. v. 17.)

1. *Historical Situation* (1 Kings xvi. 29-33).

Ahab, the King of Israel, the sixth monarch from Jeroboam, had married a beautiful princess from Tyre, in accordance with the policy of alliance begun by David and Solomon. "Foreign queens by their marriage treaties had the right to bring their religion with them."† She was a strong character, and through her influence altars and temples were erected to Baal in the capital itself.

2. *Sudden Appearance of Elijah* (xvii.).

"There seems to have existed a collection of stories about Elijah, and the first story which the compiler gives in the Book of Kings is clearly not the first of this collection, for Elijah is suddenly introduced without explanation, comment, or preface, and we are plunged into the very middle of the struggle with Ahab."‡ He comes from the wild country beyond Jordan. There alone in the mountains he had learnt to know God and His will, and there had found the courage which made him able to stand alone in the presence of King and people. Picture the scene. Then he vanishes as suddenly as he appears; all efforts to lay hands on him are fruitless.

3. *The Contest on Carmel* (xviii.).

Let the children mark his courage. "That wonderful scene is unsurpassed for grandeur and dramatic power in the whole of the Old Testament." Elijah probably did not realize the fact that there was only one God. What he did know was "that Jehovah was the God of Israel, who ought to be worshipped by all its inhabitants. Baal was an invader who had no right there."

Picture the scene. "On the one side . . . were ranged Ahab and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal; on the other stood the one grand figure of the prophet of

* "Faith of the Old Testament," p. 40.

† Montefiore, p. 313.

‡ Graveson, p. 28.

Jehovah, in his sheep-skin mantle with his long hair streaming in the wind."

Ver. 31-46: Picture the scene. Ahab goes to eat and drink, Elijah to pray, and the storm comes with sudden violence. Describe the rattling of the thunder, the swift darkening of the sky, and the figure of Elijah lit up by the flashes.

It is well worth while to spend time on the dramatic reading of this story (ver. 21-46), which is one of the masterpieces of Hebrew prose. Some of these stories have been set to very beautiful music in Mendelssohn's oratorio "Elijah."

4. *In the Wilderness* (xix.).

(a) Jezebel's fiery message.

(b) "Elijah went for his life." See map (ver. 1-8).

(c) Tired out with tremendous exertions. Depression followed as the natural reaction. Needed rest and food, which was supplied by an angel (*i.e.*, messenger, possibly human). Travels on to Mount Horeb.

(d) Elijah had lost heart and had forgotten that God was caring for him, and that it was God's work he was doing. He thought God could only be served by his success. "We must resist the temptation, strong often as our very aims are high, to worry as though we must achieve some particular task or His cause would suffer."

(e) Elijah felt out of touch. God still seemed far off, and then came the still, small voice: Septuagint version—"a sound of gentle breeze." He could hear God once more, and the children will understand that God spoke to him as He speaks to us when we are still and quiet, and want to listen (xix. 9-21).

(f) Elijah strengthened by having new work to do, a new prophet to train; two new kings over Syria and Israel to be anointed; seven thousand faithful still on God's side.

Repetition.

Isa. xl. 28-31.

5. *Naboth's Vineyard* (xxi. 1-20, 27-29).

Elijah had realized that God was a righteous God, and that He demanded righteousness from His people. Naboth, a yeoman farmer; his land had been in the family for generations. Ahab wants it for a kitchen-garden for his palace; tries to force Naboth to sell it and fails; some children will understand his feelings when he sulked and went to bed. Jezebel by a trumped-up charge obtains the farm. Ahab is confronted by Elijah when he goes to look at his new possessions.

6. *Story of Micaiah and Ahab* (xxii.).

Dramatic story. Let children discuss difference between true and false prophets.

N.B.—(1) Truth is often unpopular, and to speak it requires great courage. (2) Those who know what is right and refuse to do it lose the power of seeing what is right, or, in other words, what is God's will. The four hundred prophets may have thought that they were speaking the truth. Children can think of other examples of brave men standing alone—Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Stephen, Bunyan, etc.

The story of the "Lying Spirit" is evidence of the imperfect idea of God's character then held (ver. 20-26).

7. *Call of Elisha and Translation of Elijah* (1 Kings xix. 19-21; 2 Kings ii. 1-18).

There must have been many who were stirred by Elijah's words and who longed to join him. Amongst them was the young farmer Elisha. What would he have heard of Elijah? Perhaps he had been in the crowd and heard his message, possibly on Carmel. We do not know what Elijah had heard of him, but it came to Elijah in the wilderness: "Elisha . . . shalt thou anoint to be a prophet in thy room" (1 Kings xix. 16). One day Elisha working on his farm. Picture him at the plough.

Elijah calls him. Elisha's farewell to his parents, to his old life.

From this time Elisha lived with Elijah, and helped him, probably, in one of the schools of the prophets.

Elijah seems now to have felt that his work here was done, and that God was taking him away. Picture the journey of leave-taking. See on the map the positions of Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho, and across the Jordan the wild country of Moab associated with the undiscovered grave of Moses. Show a picture if possible. "The mountains of the other side filled the view ahead of them, and in these mountains lay the sepulchre of Moses. He who in his helplessness had already fled for new inspiration to Horeb could not fail to wonder whether God was to lay him to rest by his forerunner on Nebo."* "Whether in the original story Elisha, as he watched by his dying master, in that desolate region, sees in a vision what death means to him, and how spirit cannot die, we shall never know. It would be natural for such a vision to take in the mind of a Hebrew the form of chariots and horsemen, for the heavenly armies of Jehovah were realistically pictured."†

Elijah was never forgotten; there was always a feeling that sometime he might return.

"Let each child choose his favourite story of Elijah and narrate it."‡

ELISHA.

The picture of Elisha is less vigorously drawn. The following stories may be taken:

1. Elisha at Dothan (2 Kings vi. 8-23).
2. Naaman and Gehazi (2 Kings v.).

Expression Work.

1. Many of these stories might be dramatized.
2. The children should, if possible, be allowed to hear some of the music of the "Elijah" by Mendelssohn.
3. Discussion of the character of Elijah and Elisha.

Repetition. Let the children choose.

1. 1 Kings xvii. 1; Luke xii. 4; Ps. xxvii.
2. They may find the commandments and discuss which Ahab had broken. Choose out one to learn. Ahab does not seem to have known of them.

Learn what another prophet said about God (Mic. vi. 8).

* G. A. Smith, p. 494.

† Graveson.

‡ *Ibid.*

3. "But the righteous live for evermore; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High" (Wis. v. 15).

Ps. xvii. 15, xxiii. 4, lxxiii. 23, 24.

4. Ps. xxxiv. 6-8.

AMOS (*circa* 755 B.C.).

"The reader of the Old Testament feels a thrill when he passes from Samuel and Kings to Amos and Hosea. He had been reading history weighed and arranged by men who lived later than the events. Suddenly he hears the very voice of actors in those events, of men who helped to make the history."*

1. *Situation.*

Israel, under Jeroboam II., the great-grandson of Jehu (2 Kings xiv. 23-39), had risen to a height of prosperity which recalls the days of Solomon. Trade and commerce flourished, and many had grown rich suddenly; there was a wide gulf between rich and poor. Bribery was rampant, and the poor could not obtain justice. Baal-worship had been abandoned and a debased form of the religion of Jehovah flourished. He was worshipped under the form of a metal bull, but as long as costly sacrifices were offered there was no realization that He demanded anything else of His people. Meanwhile, unnoticed by them, a new enemy was approaching; the Assyrian army was moving westward.

"By the time of Amos . . . a generation had arisen, many of whom had never experienced war at all."†

2. *His Call.*

His home, the little village of Tekoa, twelve miles south of Jerusalem. "No one can read his book without feeling that he haunted heights, and lived in the face of very wide horizons."‡ There he made his living as a cultivator of

* Nairne, "The Faith of the Old Testament," p. 36.

† Hugh Martin, "The Meaning of the Old Testament," p. 75.

‡ G. A. Smith, "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," p. 315.

mulberry-trees and by herding a little flock of mountain sheep ; after shearing, he would carry the wool to the town markets. In these towns he saw idle people feasting, lying on couches of ivory, drinking wine out of bowls, whilst others were poor, underfed, cheated, overworked. He would go home and spend lonely days and nights minding his flock and speak to God about it, and learn to see things clearly. At last the time came when he felt he must speak : " The Lord said unto me " (Amos vii. 14, 15).

3. *His Sudden Appearance at a Festival* (cf. Elijah).

(a) Picture the dismay and astonishment amongst the festal gathering when, suddenly in their midst, they see an unknown shepherd from Judah and hear the gloomy cry :

" I hate, I despise your feasts " (v. 21).

" Seek good and not evil, that ye may live " (v. 14).

" Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel " (iv. 12).

Death and captivity coming (vii.).

(b) *Dismay of Amaziah*. Message to the King : " Amos hath conspired against thee . . . the land is not able to bear all his words." This man is dangerous (vii. 10, 11). His words to Amos : " You have no business here. Go back home, and prophesy to your sheep " (ver. 12)—if you want to prophesy. Amos answers : " The Lord took me, and told me to prophesy here." And he adds a scathing prophecy against Amaziah.

Let the children find where Amaziah swerved from the truth, and realize the harm done by half-truths (*e.g.*, the necessity for clean fighting in elections).

The Israelites thought that as the chosen people they would escape all condemnation. Amos knew that evil deeds must be followed by evil consequences (iii. 1-8). Jehovah is a God of justice and righteousness.

Amos, having delivered this message, goes back home, no one touching him. Another thought comes to him : if he cannot speak, he can write. He seems to have written down his prophecies—*e.g.*, the vision of the plumb-line (vii.). (Explain how a wall is tested.) We think of Amos as the first prophet who wrote as well as preached, and the

first of whom we know the date. He must have felt he had failed, since wickedness went on as before. Let the children discuss whether this was so, and lead them to see Amos had given God's message faithfully, and the outcome was with Him.

Repetition.

Mic. vii. 7.

HOSEA (750-735 B.C.).

1. *Situation.*

Things going from bad to worse. Three kings murdered in quick succession. The Assyrian army was soon to take advantage of Israel's defenceless state, the natural result of her luxury and her revolutions. Social wrongs were as glaring as in the days of Amos. (Hos. iv. 1-2). In 738 B.C. Pul—*i.e.*, Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria, "came against the land," and was only bought off by a large tribute.

"The text of Hosea is one of the most dilapidated in the Old Testament, and in many parts beyond the possibility of repair."*

2. *Hosea's Home-Life.*

Hosea, who lived in the Northern Kingdom, had married a girl named Gomer, whom he loved. She was selfish, and only cared to enjoy herself, and six years later ran away, leaving her husband with two little children. At last he has news of her, and, unknown to her, supplies her with food and money. She is about to be sold as a slave; he rescues her and looks after her; though he cannot have her back till she is really sorry he loves her still.

Then through his own sorrow some wonderful thoughts come to him about God. What had God done for Israel? He wanted His people to be good and loving, and upright and just, and He found "nought but swearing and breaking of faith and killing and stealing" (Hos. iv. 2)—highway robbery and murder committed even by the priests.

And yet, had God given them up? (Hos. xi. 1, 2). Hosea

* G. A. Smith, "Book of The Twelve Prophets."

still cared for Gomer—human love but a reflection of the Divine.

Contrast Amos hurling denunciations with the tender attitude of Hos. xiv. 1-4. "In his unchanging love for his faithless wife Hosea found his knowledge of the Lord."*

3. *The Allegory.*

Hosea uses the imagery of marriage to bring home God's yearning love for Israel, who has proved but a faithless bride, running after false gods. It is difficult to disentangle the allegory from the story of Hosea's personal experience, but the ideal of marriage is very beautifully expressed (ii. 19-20). Cf. story of Prodigal Son (Luke xv. 11-32).

4. *Appeal to Israel.*

He realized the sins of Israel as clearly as Amos, but appeals to the people by love rather than by denunciation. God's care in the past has been that of a Father teaching his children to walk (xi. 3-4); therefore, come let us return to the Lord (vi. 1-3).

He understood what is required of the true worshipper of Jehovah—"I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (vi. 6), quoted twice by Jesus to the Pharisees (Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7). But people still preferred murder and robbery; their refusal to return to God will be punished by captivity (xi. 5), and yet God's love will triumph in the end. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely . . . I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon" (xiv. 4-5). "Hosea is the prophet of the love of God."

5. *The Fall of the Northern Kingdom* (2 Kings xvii. 5-6).

In a few years Israel, with the other surrounding nations, became tributary to Assyria. They rebelled, and the end soon came. The Assyrian army laid siege to Samaria, and after a desperate resistance of three years the city was stormed and taken by Sargon, 722 B.C. There was a terrible massacre, and, as recorded by Assyrian inscriptions

* Nairne.

now to be found in the British Museum, 27,280 persons were carried away to different districts beyond the Euphrates, and Israel became a province of the Assyrian Empire.

6. *Origin of Samaritans* (2 Kings xvii. 22-29, 32-41).

According to the regular policy of Assyrian monarchs, people of other subject provinces were transported to Samaria. Years of war and famine had desolated the land, wild beasts roamed unchecked: "The Lord sent lions among them." The newcomers put it down to the anger of the god of the land, and asked permission to have an Israelite priest to teach them how to propitiate Jehovah. They served their own gods as well (ver. 33).

ISAIAH (*circa* 740-700 B.C.).

The Book of Isaiah is now considered to be a life and theology of Isaiah, compiled by the post-exilic Jewish Church, not a book written by Isaiah. Roughly speaking, only chapters i.-xxxv. belong to him and his time.

Isaiah lived during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (see 2 Kings xv. 32, xvi., xviii.-xx.), which the teacher should read. As Amos and Hosea were finishing their work, Isaiah began his in the Southern Kingdom.

1. *Situation.*

Unlike Amos, Isaiah was of an aristocratic family and was brought up in Jerusalem. The nation was in great prosperity. "Edom had been reconquered; Jewish ships sailed up and down the Red Sea as in the days of Solomon."* Many of the people had a great deal of money. Let the children discuss whether this makes for a nation's happiness. See Isa. iii. 18-26 for the way in which the money was being spent. Isaiah felt that whether they were prosperous or not did not matter so much. What did matter were their ideals. They seemed to care nothing for God, only for fine clothes and good living, and to be an important nation. The Lord was so real to Isaiah. What could he do?

* Gillie, "God's Lantern-Bearers," p. 219.

In these days, when the world is in such need of statesmen who are also prophets, it is worth while trying to get hold of the secret of Isaiah's power. We find it in his call.

2. *His Call* (Isa. vi.).

This story will require careful preparation if the children are to feel the mystery and the wonder of it. A little child has a strong sense of the unseen. This is easily stifled. Large classes and the conditions of modern life leave the older children with few quiet spaces in which they can listen to God's voice speaking to them and realize His presence, and so when they grow up they can no longer "see visions" (Joel ii. 28). A lesson such as this should reawaken this sense of the unseen.

Perhaps Isaiah was praying in the Temple after a service. He would be in the outer court, looking towards the building—the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, where the Jews believed God was specially present. Every Jew, though he had never seen the Holy of Holies (for no one but the high-priest was allowed to enter) knew what was there—the Ark, the Cherubim, and the Mercy-Seat. Suddenly, as Isaiah looked, the Temple seemed to fade away, and he saw right into the Palace of God, which was like the Temple, yet different. He saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, "high and lifted up," around Him a cloud of glory like a mantle filling all the Temple. Above Him stood the seraphim, beautiful, living creatures, "not human beings," perhaps "angels as bright and swift as the lightning-flash." "Each had six wings, two to cover the feet and two to cover the face, in token of their deep reverence"; "with the two remaining wings they were poised in the air, ready to fulfil His will with the utmost speed." "They were chanting one to another: 'Holy holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the fulness of the earth is His glory' (R.V., margin, ver. 3). The foundations of the threshold trembled at these voices, and the Palace was filled with smoke as if a thousand censers had been lit!"*

* See "God's Lantern-Bearers," p. 224, and Peake, p. 440.

Isaiah felt that he was not fit to be anywhere near the heavenly choir, or even there at all (read ver. 5). "Woe is me! . . . for mine eyes have seen the King" (cf. S. Peter, Luke v. 8). Death is often felt to be near because of the loss of consciousness. Isaiah feels an experience like death because "consciousness is passing the bounds of this life in the opposite direction."* His consciousness of God is becoming so vivid that he feels he can no longer bear it. Then the sense of forgiveness through the purifying fire comes to him (ver. 6, 7), and with it new life. It is as though he passed through death to a larger and fuller life.*

"His whole course afterwards shows that his newly won life consisted in the absolute union of his will with God. There is his secret—indeed, it is the secret of all the prophets; his will had been lost and found in the will of God. Hence his insight into the future,"† and the courage which enabled him to speak to the people of his time and say: "Thus saith the Lord."

These people and politicians of Jerusalem were much like ourselves—"men who would fain trust God and do right, but could not see the way clearly, and could not nerve themselves to a bold effort. They were entangled in the use and wont of complicated interests. Isaiah, from his call onwards, was freed from that entanglement. He had the single eye (Matt. vi. 22), and therefore could always discern the will of the Father, and follow its guidance from day to day."‡

The Messages given to him (ver. 8-13). Isaiah's question: "Will it always fail?" The nation will not listen. Jerusalem will be destroyed. But a remnant of the people will turn to God.

"A prophet is sent by God; he can never be produced by the wish or design of men. His message is always in advance of his contemporaries, and they do not like it. Isaiah found few to hear or understand him."‡

* Hamilton, "The People of God," vol. i., Israel.

† Nairne, "Isaiah: The Prophet and The Book," pp. 31, 32.

‡ *Ibid.*

3. *Story of the Vineyard* (Isa. v. 1-7).

For this lesson see Graveson, "Lessons on the Kingdom of Judah." "The Hebrews were a musical nation, and had all sorts of folk-songs. It is vintage-time. The people hear a voice singing a vintage song. It is the prophet, Isaiah. They draw near and become interested. He sings of a vineyard."

The teacher should tell this as a story.

4. *Ahaz and Assyria* (Isa. vii.).

Political situation. Israel and Syria had made an alliance against Assyria, and had demanded that Judah should join them (see map). When Ahaz refused, they prepared to march against Jerusalem. Ahaz desperately frightened. He wants to call in Assyria to help him.

The story is graphic. Picture the scene and the conversation between Isaiah and Ahaz. The prophet finds the King outside the city wall, inspecting the water-supply. Ahaz is timid and helpless, Isaiah prompt and courageous. He urges Ahaz to trust in God and avoid political intrigue. Isaiah's words: "Take heed and be quiet; fear not, only believe in God." They make no impression on Ahaz; he hesitates and is lost. "He rejected Isaiah's counsel, and escaped the immediate difficulty by calling in the Assyrians to protect him from his angry neighbours. This was just what Assyria always wanted. Then, as now, great empires preferred to gain tributaries, or to declare war, with some pretext of justice. But any small State that asked for Assyria's help did become tributary to Assyria, and if afterwards the small State tried to recover freedom it was punished as a rebel."* The sign which Ahaz refused—a young mother shortly to bear a child, who will call the child's name "Immanuel"—i.e., God is with us.

5. *Hezekiah's Reign* (2 Kings xviii.-xx.; Isa. xxxvi.-xxxviii.).

The Temple worship is restored. Sargon's death; vassals of Assyria inclined to rebel; Isaiah's counsel,

* Nairne, "Isaiah," p. 19.

"Having sworn allegiance to Assyria keep your promise" (Isa. xxx. 1, 2, 7, xxxi.). Advice not taken. Two years later Sennacherib with a huge army comes to punish his rebellious subjects. Hezekiah in his distress turns to God. Isaiah's prediction.

An Assyrian cylinder gives Sennacherib's own account: "Forty-six of his strong cities; his castles; and the smaller towns of their territory without number; with warlike engines; by assault and storming; by fire; and by the axe; I captured. . . . Himself like a bird in a cage I shut up inside Jerusalem his royal city."

It is an historical fact that some mysterious disaster, possibly plague, overtook the Assyrian and that Sennacherib returned to his own land. "Never, it has been said, had a prophet predicted more boldly; never was a prediction more brilliantly fulfilled."

"Between these predictions . . . and the fulfilment there is a consistency which . . . is too striking and complete to be reasonably attributed to chance."

Repetition.—"The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold" (Byron).

Isaiah's Statesmanship.

A review lesson on Isaiah as a statesman would be useful. For the political situation see paragraphs 4 and 5. Revise page 90.

The boys and girls in our schools to-day may in the future help to guide the destinies of the nation. Can they see how often the love of pleasing constituents and party, and the fear of losing office and power, clouds the vision and deflects the judgment; character stands for more than political opinions. Conditions of government alter; it is as difficult to be a leader of democracy now as it was to be an adviser to a King. Isaiah cared for the soul of his country in a materialistic age, and it is still possible for a nation to gain the whole world and lose its own soul.

The children should have some knowledge of the beautiful passages in Isa. ix., xxxv., li., and lii.

JEREMIAH.

1. *Situation.*

(a) *External Affairs.*—Judah still subject to Assyria, but the great Assyrian Empire was weakened by attacks from the Scythians, a horde of wild and savage horsemen who came from the land between the Caspian and Black Seas. They swept down across Asia and through Palestine on their way to attack Egypt (see map). Judah escaped because of its hilly country, but the people were terrified, and the country was prepared to listen to a prophet second only to Isaiah—Jeremiah.

(b) *Internal Affairs.*—Hezekiah's wicked son, Manasseh, reigned sixty years. There was a reaction from Isaiah's teaching; horrible idolatry was rampant and bitter persecution of those who remained faithful to Jehovah. Manasseh was succeeded by a reforming King—Josiah.

2. *Early Life.*

(a) Restoration of the Temple and discovery of a Book of the Law—supposed to be parts of Deuteronomy and the work of the faithful few under Manasseh (2 Kings xxii.).

(b) The result—drastic reformation; the high places destroyed (xxiii. 1-26; cf. Deut. xii. 2-5).

(c) Josiah's tragic death owing to his championship of the now weakened Assyrians against Egypt (2 Kings xxiii. 29-30).

N.B.—Nineveh fell in 606 B.C. through a combined attack of Medes and Babylonians, and with it the mighty Assyrian Empire. The whole of Western Asia changed hands. The Jews snatched at the chance of independence, and were blind to the fact that their only hope after the defeat of Egypt at Carchemish lay in submission to Babylon.

3. *The Call* (Jer. i. 4-19).

"The flowering of an almond-tree changed his whole life. The natural sign of the coming of spring compelled him to delay no longer. The Lord was waking! He too must wake and no longer excuse himself as a mere child

for delaying to save his people (ver. 6, 11-12). That is the astounding thing in all these prophets: they see their world going to ruin, and they determine to save the world."*

4. *Methods of Teaching* (cf. Isaiah).

(1) *Preaching* (v. 23-31, vii. 1-4).

(2) *Parables*. Visit to the potter (xviii. 1-6). Jeremiah walked down Potter's Lane one day and watched the potter at work. Later it came to him, in a flash, that God was working thus with Israel; so he told the story beginning, "The word which came from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house."

(3) *Acting*. Wearing of a wooden yoke (xxvii. 2, 6, 10; xxviii. 10-11; cf. Isa. xx. 1-6: Isaiah went about as a captive).

(4) *Writing*. Baruch and the roll (Jer. xxxvi.). "A fast is being held: with great courage Jeremiah resolves to deliver God's message to them all. Forbidden to enter the Temple himself, he sends Baruch, his secretary, to read his message to the assembled people. The terror-stricken crowd with veiled heads fill the court of the Temple; as the smoke of sacrifice goes up they pray for victory over the Babylonian host: and just then Baruch reads out the prophet's words, and tells them that the danger is due to their own sin, and that unless they repent the foe will come and take Jerusalem."

N.B.—A roll consisted of several skins stitched together and attached to a roll of wood. The writing was arranged in columns parallel to the roller, so that as the parchment was gradually unrolled the successive columns could be read.

Jeremiah's words came true. The King and the best half of the nation carried away to Babylon (2 Kings xxiv. 12-20). His brother Zedekiah put on the throne.

5. *His Message*.

(a) *Political*. Submission to Babylon—hence regarded as a traitor and put into the stocks for a whole day (xx. 1-6), and later imprisoned.

* "Faith of the Old Testament," p. 54.

(b) *Moral.* God cares for the individual and speaks to him, not only to the nation, as hitherto (xxx. 31-34). That involves the responsibility of every man for his own actions. Let the children discuss how far this is true. *Note.*—The fourth commandment gives the views of an earlier age. The practical point for the children to grasp is that other people suffer when they do wrong.

6. *During the Siege* (one and a half years).

(a) Efforts to influence the King (Jer. xxxvii.).

(b) Cast into a dungeon (Jer. xxxviii.).

"The gleam of hope caused by the retirement of the enemy; the suspicion and cruelty of the nobles; the fears and doubts of the King; the lack of food; the confusion which made Jeremiah's rescue possible—all these may be made elements in a vivid picture of what was going on inside the city while the Chaldæans were thundering at its gates."*

(c) The breach in the walls (2 Kings xxv. 1-21). Zedekiah's horrible fate (*cf.* Jer. xxxix. 1-10). The city deliberately burnt.

1. *His Last Days and Character* (Jer. xxxix. 11-18, xl. 1-6).

(a) He was well treated by the Chaldæans, but chose to stay with the remnant of the people; they rebelled, and he went with them into Egypt. It is supposed that his long life and suffering came to a close in that far-off land. "Wherever his unhappy countrymen were, there Jeremiah was still found saving them."†

(b) *Character.*—He was shy, affectionate, and tender-hearted. He hated having to say these hard things to his countrymen. He hated being laughed at as when he was put in the stocks. He hated being despised and called a traitor.

It was not easy for him to risk his life by slow starvation in a dungeon, and yet he never flinched. What helped him? Prayer. "One of the charms of his book is

* Glazebrook, "Studies in the Book of Isaiah."

† "Faith of the Old Testament," p. 56.

its frequency in prayer. Here for the first time in the Old Testament do we find frequent, intimate prayer. That intimacy is the essence of Jeremiah's prayers. He asks for hardly any boon. He pours out his hopes and disappointments."* He is lonely and misunderstood. It is to God he tells his sorrows.

The children will understand what it is to have a friend always with you, to whom you can tell everything. And living always with his Friend his character grew—until, "of all the heroes of the Old Testament, Jeremiah, made at last perfect by suffering, is perhaps the most beautiful type of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"We learn from this life the lesson of humblest self-surrender; the lesson of willing self-forgetfulness; the lesson of unconquerable resolve; the lesson of patient endurance; the lesson in which the other lessons are included, the lesson of present communion with a living God."†

"The influence of Jeremiah's life on posterity is a striking example of the power of great ideas, once they have entered the world by the conquest of a human soul."

EZEKIEL.

This prophet, though partially contemporary with Jeremiah, was one of the captives deported to Babylon with Jehoiachim eleven years before the fall of Jerusalem in 586. Describe the great city of Babylon, with its parks, forests, and hanging gardens surrounded by walls forty to sixty miles round and three hundred feet high, and so broad that a chariot and four horses could turn on them. The rapid River Euphrates flowed through the city, and walls were built on either side of it, pierced by gates of bronze. "Between every gate a ferry-boat plied. Besides the ferry-boats, there was a drawbridge which was pulled up every night."‡ On one side of the river stood the magnificent palace of the great King, and on the other the Temple of Bel, a building half as high again as St. Paul's Cathedral, built in stages painted different

* "Faith of the Old Testament," p. 55. † Westcott. ‡ Sayce.

colours—black, red, blue, etc., and surmounted by a golden idol forty feet high.*

1. *The Situation.*

Picture the exiles journeying to Babylon (700 miles); their sorrow. Some are settled in Babylon, others in a colony—Chebar (by a river or canal). There was no active persecution; they were allowed to do what they liked, to go on with their occupations. But they did not want to build themselves houses, in spite of Jeremiah's letter urging them to settle down (Jer. xxix. 1-20). Their one idea was to go back; they were desperately homesick (*cf.* children's feelings when away). They hated the flat plains, with their interminable canals bordered with poplars and tamarisks (which they called willows). Read Ps. cxxxvii. They longed for their home and mountains.

2. *The Prophet's Warning.*

Five years pass—a call comes to the prophet, but he does not go out and preach (*cf.* Isaiah and Jeremiah). The people come to his house (Ezek. viii. 1). His message, a sad one: "You must settle down here; the captivity is God's punishment for your idolatry and wickedness. Jerusalem will be destroyed."

They will not believe this, nor attend.

One day a messenger comes with news: "The city is smitten" (Ezek. xxxiii. 21). The terrible prophecy has come true—they can never go home. Jerusalem burnt to the ground, the Temple gone, their homes open to wind and rain (*cf.* the ruin after a fire).

3. *His Encouragement.*

The Temple is destroyed, but Jehovah lives and cares for them. If they repent, there is hope (Ezek. xviii. 27). They must gather together on the Sabbath Day, for they can worship Him without a Temple.

(1) He tells them of a wonderful vision, a dream he has had.

Give the story of the vision of the dry bones

* See Graveson, "Lessons on the Kingdom of Judah," p. 74.

(Ezek. xxxvii. 1-11). Let the children think what it can mean (ver. 14).

(2) They shall no longer wander through all the mountains. The Lord shall be their shepherd (Ezek. xxxiv. 1-16).

(3) A new Temple and a new city—four-square, with beautiful walls and twelve gates. Let the children find the name of the city: "The Lord is there" (Ezek. xlvi. 35).

Repetition.—Ezek. xxxiv. 6, 11, and 12.

THE UNKNOWN PROPHET (mainly Isa. xl. to end).

His words were so wonderful that they could only be compared with those of Isaiah, with which they were afterwards bound up, and so the Prophet is sometimes called the second Isaiah.

1. *The Situation.*

Take a map showing the Persian Gulf and Asia Minor. It was from the country just north of the Persian Gulf that Cyrus, the great Persian King, started out to conquer Asia. He was the first great ruler of the now dominant Aryan race, of that stock of which Greeks and Romans and English alike are branches. All the previous great world rulers had been Semitic or African—*e.g.*, Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian.

His country was subject to the Medes, who lived just south of the Caspian Sea, around their capital Ecbatana, and he first of all freed his countrymen and then in his turn obtained the Empire of the Medes, which reached north to Caucasus and west to the Tigris (and Cyrus extended it as far as Afghanistan). Henceforward it was called the Kingdom of the Persians.

You will see Babylon lies to the south-west of this kingdom. The Babylonian Empire included Mesopotamia and Palestine, both familiar in the last war. Cyrus leaves them for the present as he is attacked by Crœsus, King of Asia Minor, a king whose name has come down to us as famous for his great wealth. Cyrus overthrows him; it

is now clear that he will also overthrow Babylon. It is this situation that the Unknown Prophet grasps. The second Isaiah believed that the deliverance of God's people would come through him.

"I am the Lord that saith of Cyrus, Thou art My shepherd, and shall fulfil all My pleasure." Cyrus treated with kindness and consideration the nations he subdued, and possibly he was interested in the God of the Jews. Persia had a higher religion than Babylonia.

2. *The Prophet.*

Those who were children had grown up in exile; the Jews settled down, found work, and acquired possessions. Some were forgetful of their own religion, others kept faithful, but they were perplexed. It was hard to go on believing in Jehovah, when He seemed to have forgotten them; but one day, as it has been said, there was heard in the land the thrilling voice of the great unnamed Prophet.

3. *His Message.*

(a) They were to go back, back to their own land. Read Isaiah xl. in sections. Let the children feel the ring of the poetry: "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people" (ver. 1, 2).

It seems to the Prophet that he hears voices; they are carrying the glad tidings over the desert, urging preparations for the return (ver. 3-5).

Illustrate by accounts of royal journeys in olden days, when there were no bridges or roads. Now the King Himself is coming. "He shall march with His people back to their city." Let the road be made ready.

The voice of the tidings: "Cry."

A despairing voice: "What shall I cry?"

Voice of the tidings: "All flesh is . . . but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (ver. 6-8).

Further on the way to Jerusalem the watchmen take up the cry "O thou that tellest good tidings" (ver. 9-11).

A final burst of triumph—the Prophet *knows* there is no other God (ver. 28-31).

(b) Israel was not only to go back, but to be the nation through whom the whole world was to be blessed.

"I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. xlix. 6).

What does saving and helping others always involve? Cf. Isaiah and Jeremiah and modern examples.

The Prophet's own experience would teach him that this great work could only be accomplished through misunderstanding and suffering.

Isaiah liii. is much beyond the children, but let them read verses 4-7, and ask them of what the words remind them (cf. Acts viii. 32, 33), and remind them that 500 years later, when Jesus was a boy at Nazareth, He used to read and learn those very words, and when He grew up and could understand them better it may be that He gradually realized that they would find a fulfilment in Himself.

"Of all Old Testament passages, this seems to be the one which has specially served to open the mind of the Apostolic Church to the meaning of the death of Christ."*

THE BOOKS OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

We have now come to the last *historical* books of the Old Testament. They are a collection, made many years later, of loose notes—family and city registers, Temple records, and personal records of Ezra and Nehemiah. It is difficult to get a connected story of events.

The Persian Empire is now dominant for 200 years. For reference we give a list of the kings:

Cyrus	-	-	-	-	539-529
Cambyzes	-	-	-	-	529-522
Darius I.	-	-	-	-	521-485
Xerxes I.	-	-	-	-	485-464
Artaxerxes I.	-	-	-	-	464-424†

Babylon fell in 538 B.C., the city surrendering without a blow being struck in its defence. Some of the Jews re-

* Nairne, "Isaiah," p. 112.

† Peake, p. 323.

turned, after a time, to their own land : we have no details given, but we can picture the setting forth.

1. *The Journey.*

"The long train of camels laden with mothers and children, tent equipment, food, clothes, cooking utensils, etc."* All ranks of people; priests, artisans, slaves, rejoicing and singing. Trace the route on the map along the Tigris, across the River Euphrates, following the caravan route to Damascus, 600 miles. After four or five months they would see mountains, some of them for the first time in their lives. The snow-capped range of Hermon would come into sight, and then on the east side of the Lake of Galilee, across the Jordan, at last the Hill of Zion.

2. *The Arrival.*

A city of ruins—they would feel depressed and sad. There were two leaders, Joshua and Zerubbabel. Discuss what could be done : houses to build, altar of burnt offering to be set up, foundations of the Temple to be laid (Ezra iii. 6-13). By law the sacrifices could only be offered in Jerusalem. "Imagine the feelings of the *older* people, taking part in this act of worship for the first time after fifty years, and of the *younger* ones, who had never seen a sacrifice to Jehovah before."* The old people weep, the young rejoice. Let the children think why.

Offer of help from Samaritans refused. Let the children discuss if it should have been accepted. As it was the Samaritans made mischief. It was the beginning of a bitter feud (see p. 88; John iv. 9). The work at a standstill for sixteen years. Later the Samaritans built their own Temple on Mount Gerizim.

3. *Haggai and Zechariah* (see also Ezra v. 1, 2).

On the occasion of the festival of the new moon (approx. September 1, 520 B.C.) a new prophet comes and preaches a wonderful sermon to the people. What does he say? (Haggai i. 1-12). "You are putting off building God's

* See Graveson.

House, though you yourselves live in panelled houses. You say : ' We are poor ; there is a famine ; times are bad.' Nothing will go right with you until you rebuild God's House."

The result (ver. 12-14). His burning eloquence rouses the people, who begin building. Two months later Haggai speaks again to encourage them. Some of them, remembering the glories of Solomon's Temple, feel discouraged. Haggai's message (see Hag. ii. 3-4, 7-9). Good progress is made.

Another prophet encourages them—Zechariah. He has a beautiful vision of the new Jerusalem in the midst of which God Himself shall dwell. He gives it a new name, "the City of Truth." Remind the children of what Ezekiel called the city. How eagerly the people must have listened !

"In the lovely City of Truth the terror of wild beasts and treacherous enemies would cease to exist."*

It shall be so safe, there shall be no famine or wars or sieges, but "the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof" (Zech. viii. 3-6).

Its King is not to ride on a horse, the symbol of war, but "upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass," the symbol of peace (Zech. ix. 9).

Repetition.—Hag. ii. 7-9 ; Zech. viii. 3-5, 8.

516 B.C. the Temple is finished, and a dedication service held, followed by the Feast of the Passover (Ezra vi. 16).

Nothing is recorded of the next fifty years.

The Jewish nation is now divided into three parts. Those who went to Egypt with Jeremiah, and perhaps the richer and more consequential, are gathered in and around the imperial capital, Babylon. . . . The other occupies the city of Jerusalem, gradually rising from its ruins and a belt of country round it on the grey Judæan hills. . . . Many families were comfortably settled in rich Babylonia, and had no wish to leave it, yet some were keenly interested in the fortunes of the community at Jerusalem and

* Graveson.

of the Holy City. If they themselves only went occasionally to worship the Lord in His Temple, much, no doubt, of their money found its way to Jerusalem.*

As the years went on, two noted men, Ezra and Nehemiah, heard the call to go. They went at different times; from the documents it is difficult to disentangle the relation between the two.

EZRA.

We find the story of Ezra in Ezra vii. 6-28, viii. 21-36, and Neh. viii. Picture—

(1) Ezra in Babylon; a scribe collecting and writing the rolls of the laws of Moses. He realizes that the people in Jerusalem ought to have these laws, and he gets permission from the King to leave his home and to make the long journey.

(2) The Journey (see Ezra vii. 6-28, viii. 21-23, 31-32).

(3) The Arrival. The reading of the Law to the people throughout seven days, followed by the Feast of Tabernacles (Neh. viii.).

Still things did not go well. We find a description in the Book of Malachi. Malachi ("My Messenger"), an anonymous prophet. He gives a vivid picture of the prevailing depression, discontent, and poverty. The people bring as sacrifices to God animals which would not be considered good enough for the Persian Governor. Some complain that they got nothing by worshipping Jehovah, and some have lost their faith in Him altogether.

NEHEMIAH (445 B.C.).

I. *Situation.*

Let the children recall—

(a) Scenes at the Persian Court.

(b) His Journey (Neh. i. ; ii. 1-12).

Artaxerxes, the Persian king, gives him—

(i.) Leave of absence from the Persian Court;

(ii.) Appoints him the governor of Judæa; and

* Bevan, p. 4.

(iii.) Supplies him with a troop of Persian soldiers as escort.

(c) The midnight ride round the city (Neh. ii. 12).

2. *His Work.*

(a) *The Building of the Walls.*

(i.) *A Great Undertaking.*—Let the children get some idea of the work it would entail.

(ii.) *What was Essential for Success.*—Let the children consider—A leader—one who was able to inspire others (*cf.* good captain for games) and who was at the same time a good organizer. Workers, who would co-operate. Note the value of co-operation. Each did his own work; there was no failure; “they had a mind to work.”

(iii.) *The Difficulties to be Surmounted.*—The opposition of the Samaritans; they try ridicule (Neh. iv. 1-6). They plan a surprise attack (Neh. iv. 7-16), but Nehemiah’s precautions are successful (Neh. iv. 17-23; *cf.* Neh. vi.).

(iv.) *Solemn dedication of the walls and great thanksgiving service.* Picture the two processions, led by Ezra and Nehemiah respectively, going round the walls in opposite directions, accompanied by bands of singers, and finally meeting at the valley gate. “And the women and the children rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off” (Neh. xii. 27-43).

(b) *Religious and Moral Reforms* (Neh. v.).

The poverty of the people; they complain that they have not enough to eat; that they have a heavy land tax to pay to the Persians; that they have mortgaged their farms and cannot pay the interest. Nehemiah calls a meeting of the harsh creditors and upbraids them.

How can they treat their brothers so cruelly? They had charged 12 per cent. (1 per cent. a month), and when the debtors could not pay they had taken their children as slaves, and sold them up. The creditors promise to restore the land (Neh. v. 12). Perhaps Nehemiah's own example made them ashamed of themselves, for he had not even taken the salary as Persian Governor to which he was entitled, and had entertained 150 persons at his table every day. Point out that what we do avails more than what we say.

3. *The Character of Nehemiah.*

Let the children sum up. Generous, enthusiastic, unselfish, energetic, and patriotic. He sacrificed a good appointment and took endless trouble to help his country.

N.B.—Point out ways in which ordinary citizens can serve their town, and through it their country—*e.g.*, to be willing to give time to further municipal undertakings and to serve on councils; to pay rates cheerfully, and to sacrifice private interests for the good of the community. The teacher must adapt the suggestions here to local conditions.

THE INTER-TESTAMENT PERIOD.

Books to Read.

Bevan, "Jerusalem under the High-Priests."

Grant, "Between the Testaments."

Charles, "Between the Old and New Testaments."

The period between Malachi and S. Matthew is to many people a blank. They do not realize that the Book of Malachi is not the last writing of the O.T. A number of the Psalms, the Book of Daniel, and the Book of Jonah were all written during this time, but we find its history elsewhere.

The close of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah left

the Jews having just returned to their own land; their city and Temple rebuilt, yet bereft of all their power and glory. They were to be found only in Jerusalem and in the fields and villages around for a radius of ten or fifteen miles; in "Galilee of the Gentiles" the population was composed of "barbarians." "But at the beginning of the N.T. we find that Palestine is part of a Roman province, and is one of the most densely populated parts of the Empire; its cities are crowded; its terraced hills are cultivated to the last inch; its merchants share in, and largely control, the trade of the Mediterranean world, and general prosperity marks the time."

"We now find a state of affairs which cannot be explained by what we know of the O.T. Jews. Who is Herod the King? Pilate, the Roman Governor? How has the power of Rome replaced that of Persia?"*

(1) The Jews until (*circa*) 330 B.C. were under Persian rule.

(2) From 330 B.C. to 178 B.C. they were first subjects of Alexander the Great, then of the kingdoms which were formed out of his Empire—Egypt and Syria.

(3) A short period of independence.

(4) They came under Rome.

Under Alexander the Great.†

Picture—

(1) How he conquered the world. See "Piers Plowman Histories," Book I.

(2) How he founded cities to carry Hellenism (see below) all through his dominions.

(3) How he favoured the Jews, and turned them into a sort of intelligence department. Let the children think why? Jews from all parts constantly travelling up to Jerusalem for the Feasts, so knew roads, fords, distances.

(4) How he turned a little fishing village into a won-

* Pelton, "A Gift from the East," p. 33.

† Gardner, "Friends of the Olden Time."

derful city—Alexandria, the metropolis of the Mediterranean, and allowed the Jews to settle there in large numbers. (The Jews had been in Egypt since the time of Jeremiah.)

N.B.—What was Hellenism? “A body of ideas which came from the race who called themselves Hellenes, and whom we generally call Greeks. They lived for the most part in little separate States which consisted only of a city and the territory immediately around it. These ideas were embodied in the language they spoke, in their literature and drama, in their games, buildings, and worship.”*

Under his Successors.

At Alexander's death there was a wild scramble for his dominions; sixty years later we find three kingdoms, two of which were Egypt and Syria (see map), and let the children think to which country Palestine was likely to be annexed. It looks as if it ought to belong to Syria, and so the Kings of Syria thought; but Egypt coveted it because they wanted the trade routes to Bagdad; for some time it was under Egypt.

In the time of Ptolemy II. the Jews in Alexandria began to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. This translation is one of the most famous versions of the O.T. We call it the Septuagint (LXX.), from an old legend that seventy men were brought from Jerusalem to do it. In 216 B.C. Palestine was conquered by Syria, and troublous times began, which culminated in the accession of Antiochus—“Epiphanes the Magnificent,” as he called himself, “Epimanes the Madman,” as the common people named him for his horrible cruelty. It was he who determined that all his kingdom should become Greek in manners, customs, and religion, and then followed in Palestine one of the most awful periods of religious persecution the world has ever seen. “For the King sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem . . . that they should . . . forbid burnt offering and sacrifice . . . in the Temple; and that

* Bevan (adapted).

they should profane the Sabbath and festival days, set up altars and groves and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh. . . . Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved . . . not to eat any unclean thing. Wherefore they chose rather to die"* (1 Macc. i. 63).

We find this story in the Apocrypha. In the first six chapters of the first Book of the Maccabees we find the accounts of the heroic resistance of the Jews under Judas Maccabeus. The Book of Daniel was written at this time. (See p. 155.)

The Temple was cleansed and rededicated on December 25, 168 B.C. The Feast of the Dedication was instituted in commemoration (*cf.* John x. 22).

Judas Maccabeus was killed, but his brother secured the independence of Judæa, and their descendants governed it as high-priests till 67 B.C., when, owing to internal dissensions, it was placed under the protection of Rome.

The first of the Herods, a descendant of the Maccabees, got himself nominated King of the Jews by the Roman Senate.

On the death of Herod, shortly after the birth of Christ, his dominions were divided between his three sons. Herod Antipas became Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea; Philip, Tetrarch of the territory beyond Jordan; and Archelaus, ruler of Judæa.

Archelaus was removed for misconduct, and a Roman Procurator put in his place. Pontius Pilate held this office from 26 A.D. to 36 A.D.

"Perhaps at no other time, either before or since, has there been so much aspiration, so much ardent longing for a future in which God should reign more visibly and triumphantly than ever in the past. To this attitude of intense expectation culminated the preparation in history for the coming of Christ; it was in the midst of it that He came, and to it that He appealed."

"In the fulness of time God sent forth His Son."

* M. Pelton.

† Sanday.

THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST AS RECORDED BY ST. MARK.

Books to Read.

A. G., "Jesus in History and Experience."

Young, "College S. Mark."

It is suggested that in these lessons the experiment be made of letting the children read a Gospel. Great care should be taken that the first reading be made as interesting as possible; the ideal should be that the children should not only answer, but also ask questions, and they will do that if their minds are really working, and if the parts beyond their experience are left out. The Gospel of S. Mark is chosen as being the shortest and most vivid, and from it the children should be able to get some idea of the ministry as a whole.

*Suggested Introductory Lessons.*1. *Discussion about Biographies.*

Let the children try to write a short life of some hero, historical or missionary, whom they know well. Emphasize the need of selection. Everything cannot be told; what must they put in and what leave out? If the children have any knowledge of them, discuss standard biographies. The greatest Life of all, who could write it? Children may suggest the Apostles.

What qualifications necessary?

- (1) To know and love the Person.
- (2) To be able to write clearly; a good memory; if possible, a good education.
- (3) To have access to information—from people and books.

2. *Writer of the Gospel.*

Which of the Apostles loved our Lord the most and had been with Him when the others were not? Peter, James, and John. James was killed very soon, and Peter and John were too busy telling the good news to stop and write it down (their orders, Matt. xxviii. 18-20); and there

seemed no reason why they should, for in Palestine there were so many people who had seen the Lord and could tell about His doings, and they all thought He would come again very soon (Acts i. 11); but in after years we find Peter miles away in Italy, at Rome, and someone with him. Who? "Marcus, my son." We call him Mark. Mark probably interpreted for Peter, hearing him tell over and over again the stories of Jesus. Peter martyred about 64.

S. Mark at Rome.

N.B.—How do we know about him there? The famous testimony of Papias, *circa* 125. Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything which he remembered. And there is a little bit of writing by Clement of Alexandria (190-203): "Mark, a follower of Peter, when Peter was preaching the gospel publicly in Rome before certain of the trading classes, was asked by his hearers to compose a permanent memorial of Peter's discourses, and so came to write, from his memory of them, the Gospel which is called the Gospel according to S. Mark." Let us picture to ourselves—

- (a) The converts coming to S. Mark. "All will soon be killed who knew the Lord; can you not write a life of the Master? You can remember S. Peter's stories: you heard them so often."
- (b) S. Mark preparing; thinking what to put in; remembering the Lord promised to help when difficult work had to be done (see John xiv. 16).
- (c) Pondering over the first sentence; of great importance to begin well. Read verse 1: "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ."
- (d) What shall he record first? Not the Birth, which the children will suggest, but what S. Peter would first remember.

3. *The Preaching of S. John the Baptist* (i. 2-8).

How the news came to Capernaum of a new prophet, who said "Someone is coming; I am His messenger."

(All Jewish boys knew by heart the O.T. prophecy that when the expected King came, a messenger would prepare the way.)

Could this be He? Peter, Andrew, James, and John, take a holiday and go off to see for themselves. What do they find? Read verses 4-8.

4. *The First Mention of our Lord.*

The news reaches Nazareth. "Jesus Christ leaves His home, laying down His workman's tools, and mingles with the crowd on the banks of the Jordan." The sight must have moved Him deeply—the respectable Pharisees, the motley crowd they despised, and the rough soldiers, all thrilled with the message that the King and the Kingdom were at hand, confessing their sins openly, and being baptized as a sign of a new beginning, if that way they could be ready.

5. *The Baptism (i. 9-11).*

What would the Father have Him to do? He joins the crowd and is baptized. As He comes up out of the water He is praying, and the heavens open. "The perfect servant of the Lord, neither deaf nor blind, saw sights hidden from less perfect servants and heard accents inaudible and inarticulate to them."

N.B.—The child will have no difficulty in taking verse 10 literally; later he may realize that the veil between the visible and the invisible world is very thin, and that in all ages the saints have sometimes been through—*e.g.*, S. Stephen, S. Paul, S. Francis, and in our day Sundar Singh and Bishop Moorhouse.*

Visions seem to occur at the crises of life or when great decisions have to be made. "Then the powers by which we apprehend the unseen are preternaturally acute, and sensitive to the vibrations of the spiritual world, where we are so little at home by nature. Further, at the moment the emotion and the insight are intense, but when 'back in the body' the experience can be expressed only

* "Life of Bishop Moorhouse."

in the usual channels of sensation, such as sight and hearing.”*

6. *The Temptation* (i. 12, 13).

Jesus knew that He had to summon men to the Kingdom, now no longer in the vague future, but actually at hand, yet before He could proclaim the Kingdom He had to think out what would be the best way.

The child will see that He must needs be alone to do this. Picture the wilderness. “For hours, as you travel across the wilderness, you may see no sign of life except the scorpions and vipers, in the distance a few wild goats or gazelles, and at night the wailing of the jackal and the hyena’s howl.”

“Not immediately after the Temptation, but after the arrest of John, Jesus returned to Galilee from the south country and took up John’s message.”†

We can trace an order in this Gospel :

- (1) Public teaching and healing (i. 14 to iii. 12).
- (2) The training of the disciples (iii. 13 to ix. 1) and teaching by parables, leading up to the confession of S. Peter.
- (3) The last journey to Jerusalem ; the Crucifixion and Resurrection (ix.-xvi. 8).

The Ministry in Galilee.

Now S. Mark is on very familiar ground ; how often he has heard S. Peter tell the story of his call ! Picture the scene (i. 16-20). Then he goes straight on to the first Sabbath day (21-39).

“That Sabbath was one of the few days in our Lord’s life we can recover almost entire, from the synagogue service in the forenoon to the last scenes of wonder in the dark ; we understand why that day stood out and unforgettable in Peter’s mind. Watching Jesus as He cast out the unclean spirit, taught the people, healed the sick,

* Hooke, p. 17 (adapted).

† Peake.

the first disciples found themselves in a new world. The Kingdom of God was already here. . . .”*

Very early the next morning He rose, and, leaving His sleeping companions and going through the dark streets, made His way to the hills, and there prayed. But Peter and some of the others followed after Him: “They are all looking for You” (ver. 37).

N.B.—In every city stood a synagogue; here the people met twice every Sabbath to hear the sacred Scriptures read in Hebrew and expounded in Aramaic. The service included prayers and a sermon as well. Usually the scribes took the service, but any Jews might be asked to read or preach. Let the children draw a plan of the inside; an oblong building with a gallery for the women, a recess at one end covered by a curtain where the Ark (a chest) was kept which contained the two parchment rolls of the Law and the Prophets. Seats for the men faced the middle of the building, where was a low platform used as a reading-desk and pulpit. The chief seats for the rulers of the synagogue had their backs to the Ark.

Galilee.

The most northerly province of Palestine, a high plain broken by irregular mountains; at the eastern side this suddenly dropped down into a deep gulf, through which flowed the Jordan, and in the midst of which (500 feet below the level of the Mediterranean) lay the lovely harp-shaped Sea of Galilee, 13 miles long by 6 broad. On its eastern shore ran a fringe of green, and above towered steep, bare hills. On the western side were gently sloping mountains, covered with corn-fields; below them the shore was beautiful with olive-trees and groves of oranges and figs. At the northern end was the delta of the river and the plain of Gennesareth, watered with many streams from the hills, a paradise of beauty, where stood the chief cities of the lake—Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin. Fish swarmed in the waters, and hundreds of fishermen found employment there; the whole district was an important

* Maltby, “Studies in S. Mark.”

centre of trade, as the great highways from Egypt to Damascus and from Phœnicia to the Euphrates ran through it.*

The Journey through Galilee (i. 39).

Let the children feel the delight of that early summer when Jesus first began to preach and teach in Galilee. It has been said, "He was filled with the joy of His work"; eager crowds follow Him all day long, anxious to have their sick healed, but are also attracted by His teaching, the like of which they have never heard before. The Kingdom of God is the subject of the preaching, but it is He who is King, though the people know it not. How exciting and wonderful it must all have been for the disciples, and how important they felt themselves!

The Cleansing of a Leper (i. 40-45).

Let the children realize the isolation of a leper, and the astonishment with which the crowd saw Jesus touch him.

The Return to Capernaum and the Healing of the Paralytic (ii. 1-12).

The Call of Levi (ii. 13-17).

The scene at the customs office, a booth or shed on the shore of the lake, makes another graphic picture—the booth probably close to the great road running from Damascus to the coast; the tax-gatherer ready to weigh the goods and charge the tax. The tolls were charged on goods entering a city or district; "a man would lease the right of collecting the customs of a town or village for a fixed sum annually. No wages were given, but any money made by the collector beyond the amount was his own, hence the temptation to overcharge. Those who farmed taxes in this way were called 'publicani' by the Romans: from this comes the English word. Publicans in the New Testament means customs officers. This method of levying taxes led to great cruelty and injustice in Palestine, as it does always and everywhere; and in

* Stalker (adapted), p. 56.

consequence all publicans were hated, despised, and treated as sinners.”*

What did Levi give up? The certainty of getting rich. Let the children discuss what are the good things money can give us, and what Levi got in exchange. A hard open-air life, plain food, no certain lodging, with the companionship of Jesus and the joy of working for Him.

“Matthew’s instantaneous response to the call to be a disciple proves two things: that our Lord knew his character, and that Matthew already knew something of Christ’s teaching. . . . In one sense the response of Matthew to the call of Christ was a greater act of faith than that of Peter and Andrew, or James and John. The fishermen could always return to their fishing; they did not ‘burn their ships’ by following Christ. But for Matthew no such return was possible. His lucrative post would be at once filled up, and an ex-toll-gatherer would find it hard indeed to get any other employment. He risked everything by following Jesus.”†

“The Master called, ‘Come, follow,’

That was all.

My gold grew dim,

My soul went after Him,

I rose and followed.

That was all. Who would not follow

If they heard His call?”

The Growing Hostility.

Let the children think of S. Mark laying down his pen and considering how he should go on. He perhaps remembers S. Peter saying: “It was such a happy time at first, crowds followed the Master and loved to hear Him, but as time went on a different feeling crept in; sometimes people were whispering together and looking angry.” Who were they? The teachers of religion, the scribes and the Pharisees.

* “College S. Matthew,” p. 18 (adapted).

† Plummer, p. 138.

The Healing of the Paralyzed Man.

(1) ii. 1-12: Note, amid the general amazement, the group who were thinking to themselves, "Who can forgive sins?"

(2) ii. 13-17: The feast at Levi's house; the Pharisees shocked and puzzled to see our Lord at a feast with publicans and sinners. "Why does your Master mix up with such people? We look the other way if we see them in the street."

N.B.—S. Mark may have grouped the following incidents.

(3) iii. 23-28: The walk through the corn-fields on a Sabbath afternoon, the Pharisees following. "Why do your disciples do that which is not lawful?" They cannot understand why our Lord seemed to think so little of the rules which were to them so important. Other feelings come into their hearts; they could not bear to see the people following after Jesus, and waiting only to hear Him; *they* were the teachers of religion, yet no crowds followed them. What were these feelings? Envy and jealousy. Discuss with the children how they let them grow until there was no room in their hearts for anything else, and they only listened because they wanted to find fault.

Evidently in iii. 5 there was a scene of great excitement. "Jesus looked round about on them with anger, and they took counsel . . . how they might destroy Him." "Jesus withdrew from the town to the seaside because He was aware of the plots against Him (iii. 6). He and His would be safer on the open beach, surrounded by crowds of followers, than in the narrow streets of Capernaum. His friends would prevent an arrest; in case of danger a boat was at hand."*

It was a time of great crisis. S. Luke tells us that Jesus spent the night in prayer (vi. 12-13). In the morning He chooses His Twelve Apostles; from this time His aim was not so much public preaching as teaching.

* Swete, S. Mark.

The Choosing of the Twelve Apostles (iii. 13-19).

Mark had probably a vivid recollection of how this event stood out in S. Peter's memory, and of how delighted he was that he and his friends were chosen.

"Jesus was one evening up a mountain; afterwards He told us He had been praying the whole night. In the early morning He called us to Him and chose twelve of us. I and my brother, James and John, were amongst them; we were so glad that all four of us were chosen. He said He wanted us to help Him, and we should be able to do some of the wonderful things He did; we were to learn by being with Him."

Teaching by Parables.

"Then the Master began to teach in a different way: He told stories." Let the children think what kind of stories—stories with a meaning. Why did He tell stories with a meaning? To make people think. The other reason—to hide the meaning from the careless—will be beyond the children.

The Sower (iv. 1-20).

Picture the scene. Our Lord in a boat; around Him the blue waters of the lake; on the yellow sand a crowd of Eastern peasants in their bright-coloured garments. As He looks up, perhaps sees on the sloping hill-side above a sower sowing seed, the birds flying around. Let the children read verses 1-9.

The disciples could not think what it meant. Can the children? After their suggestions let them read verses 11-20. The children might give examples of people they remember in the N.T. who seem to fall into the different classes:

The seed growing secretly (iv. 26-29).

The mustard seed (30-32).

S. Mark now puts in four stories which he knew very well, for S. Peter loved to tell them. S. Mark remembers the very words he used.

The Stilling of the Storm.

Let the children read straight through; they will be interested to discover the little details that only someone who had seen it would mention (ver. 36).

N.B.—Sudden storms caused by cold currents which were sucked down the narrow gorges between the hills and broke with violence in the middle of the lake.

Picture the still evening; the Lord, very tired, lays His head on the steersman's seat and falls asleep.

The first time the disciples had seen our Lord's power over Nature: "they feared exceedingly." Not cowards now—a different word—they are filled with awe as they realize that Jesus is greater than they knew.

The Gadarene Demoniac (v. 1-20).

N.B.—No places where the sick or mentally deranged could be taken. "We must remember the enervating climate of the lake-side, 680 feet below sea-level; the lack of sanitation and of hospitals, and the fact that the insane roamed about the streets at will, only dangerous cases, like the Gadarene demoniac, being removed to lonely places, chained up, and left to perish."*

Picture the scene. Jesus and His disciples landing, the dangerous lunatic coming out of the tombs and running to meet them; probably the disciples shrink back afraid. Jesus remains, and the man falls down at His feet. He bids the unclean spirit come forth, and asks the man who he is. The man says he does not know; he is so many people. Jesus probably went on talking to him till he was calmer and himself once more. Meanwhile there was a herd of pigs rooting about for food at the top of the cliff; suddenly there was a stampede, and they rushed down into the lake.

Let the children suggest what could have frightened them, and what excuse the herdsman might give to the owners. The Jews believed that all lunatics were possessed by evil spirits, and they thought that the spirits had gone into the pigs. Peter shares this view.

* Findlay, "Jesus as they saw Him," p. 49.

We can reject the explanation of the facts without doubting them. We know too little, however, of the whole subject to be confident that the control of men and animals by evil spirits is impossible.

It is, of course, possible that the maniac had moved towards the herd, and that his last frenzied cries and gestures had frightened the swine.

Jairus' Daughter and the Woman who touched the Hem of His Garment (v. 22-43).

N.B.—Ver. 39: The ordinary Greek word for "sleep" is used. Ver. 41: Let the children note "Talitha Cumi." What language? Aramaic—the vernacular of Palestine and of Aram (or Syria). All the O.T. books were written in Hebrew, but by the time of the Maccabees Hebrew was spoken only by the learned.

The language our Lord and His disciples spoke was the vernacular, but nearly everyone understood Greek as well. Cf. a child in Wales speaking Welsh and understanding English. Let the children find other Aramaic words quoted by S. Mark (vii. 34, xv. 34).

Rejection at Nazareth.

Let children read S. Mark vi. 1-6, and tell them the story. More fully told in S. Luke iv. 16-30.

Picture Nazareth. Let the children suggest what the people there will have heard of Him since He left.

One Sabbath day the news is spread that He has returned; many were glad to see Him, for they loved Him. Where would they be sure to find Him? In the synagogue. Describe the service. (See p. 112.)

Jesus is asked to read; He finds Isaiah lxi. 1-2 (the words might be learned), shuts the book—*i.e.*, folds up the roll—sits down. (Cf. the difference in our customs.) Every Jew knew that this passage referred to the Messiah. Jesus begins His sermon: "To-day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

At first they listen to Him breathlessly—what wonderful words! Then they remember that He is only the

carpenter, a workman like themselves. How could He be the King? They grow angry, take hold of Him, push Him out of the synagogue; they mean to kill Him.

They drag Him to the top of the hill to push Him over. Why did they not do it? (Luke iv. 30). Something must have stopped them, for S. Luke says: "Jesus passed through the midst of them."

Let the children think why the people could not believe what He said. See how jealousy and envy had blinded their eyes (Matt. v. 8).

"A boy was born at Bethlehem
That knew the haunts of Galilee.
He wandered on Mount Lebanon,
And learned to love each forest tree.

"But I was born at Marlborough,
And love the homely faces there;
And for all other men besides
'Tis little love I have to spare.

"I should not mind to die for them,
My own dear downs, my comrades true.
But that great heart of Bethlehem,
He died for men He never knew.

"And yet I think at Golgotha,
As Jesus' eyes were closed in death,
They saw with love most passionate
The village street at Nazareth."

(E. Hilton Young.)

The Sending Out of the Twelve (vi. 7-13). *The Return* (30). See Year III.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand, and the Walking on the Sea (vi. 30-56).

If these are very familiar, let the children read them straight through. Note S. Peter leaves out one story about himself (cf. Matt. xiv. 28-32). As the boat lands we have a vivid picture of the crowds (ver. 54-56).

The Journey to the North (vii. 24).

Some Reasons for our Lord going out of Galilee.

(1) It was not safe for Him to remain in the dominions of Herod Antipas.

(2) The hostility of the religious leaders.

(3) Not enough time to teach His disciples; crowds always round Him.

Let the children trace on the map where they went. The ports of Tyre and Sidon; journey probably took several months.

"Picture what it must have been to the disciples to have Jesus always with them, walking along under the summer sun, resting by the way, camping out at night; they must have got to know so well the inflections of His voice, His step in the darkness, His characteristic movements. We should like to know what they talked about as they sat at their evening meal, for nothing would fail to interest Him."*

Healing of the Deaf Man (vii. 31-37).

Note another Aramaic word.

The Healing of the Blind Man (viii. 22-26).

Draw the attention of the children to the method of healing.

The Confession of S. Peter (viii. 27-33).

Picture the scene. Jesus perhaps sitting down to rest, and calling them round Him; He had something to ask them (ver. 27-28): "And you, who do you say that I am?" Who was sure to answer quickly? (ver. 29). "Christ is the Greek form of the Hebrew 'Messiah.'"

"Natural though the answer seems to us, it was a great thing for the disciples to say. For round this name had gathered the nation's best and most splendid dreams. . . . It was as one coming in the clouds of heaven, as a King of David's line, leading a great national uprising, that they were looking for Him."†

* The Nation.

† A. G., "Jesus in History and Experience," p. 13 (adapted).

The first lesson had been learnt by the disciples. They had come to feel that Jesus was their long-expected King. This they knew, not because they had been told, but because of what He was.

Now Jesus begins to teach them the more difficult lesson of verse 31. From this time the teaching about the coming of sacrifice and suffering and death was continually repeated, but they could not understand it.

Picture Jesus stopping and calling the crowd round Him. He did not say, "If you will follow Me, I will lead you against the Romans, and you shall rule the world," but something far different. The illustration of Garibaldi which is given below has been found to appeal to children, and seems to help them to understand verses 34-38. Let the class read them directly after the story.

In 1848, when the little Republic of Rome, which had bravely held out against the enemy beyond the limit of all expectation, was about to surrender to the old corrupt Government which was backed by Austria, Garibaldi, whose determination and bravery through the siege had encouraged them to hold on, stood out on the open space where they were all gathered before the great Cathedral of S. Peter: "I am going out for Rome; I offer neither quarters nor provisions nor wages. I offer hunger and thirst, forced marches, probably death. Let him who loves his country better than himself follow me." And there followed him across that open space the brave men who were the liberators of Italy.

The Transfiguration (ix. 1-13).

Mark knew that there was a night in S. Peter's life when something so wonderful happened that he never forgot it. It was six days after, and Jesus had called the three of them to go apart with Him up the mountain. Peter had told him of the stillness, the dark night, the Master before them going up and up, that at last He stopped and knelt down, and they watched Him until their eyes almost shut with sleep. Suddenly they are wide awake, for around them is a dazzling light; it is coming

from Jesus; they see His garments become glistening, "exceeding white as no fuller on earth could white them." As they look they see He is not alone; there are two of the prophets, Moses and Elias, and they are talking together. It was so beautiful and happy that Peter wanted it all to last; and then they became frightened—a cloud hid the light, they heard a voice and then they were alone with Jesus. Picture them going down the hill talking to each other. What did Jesus say to them? (ver. 9).

The Epileptic Boy (14-29).

The disciples coming to Jesus; they do not know why they failed; they have done wonderful things before (vi. 13). Let the children discuss verse 28, and note that some of Christ's followers now have power to heal diseases. Why have not more people got it? (Ver. 29, R.V. omits fasting.)

Who shall be Greatest?

Let the class read 30-37. S. Peter knew afterwards why they did not attend. Something else was in their minds. In an earthly kingdom there were big positions: which of them would have the most important? They begin to quarrel about it (ver. 33).

"We may picture them journeying on, with our Lord a little in front, close enough to hear high words. He does not interrupt. He does not turn on them and chide. The Apostles would not have grown to what they did if they had been checked at every turn. . . . The dispute has died away; they are in the house at Capernaum. . . . Our Lord sat down and called the Twelve. From this they might be sure He had something of moment to say. The gentleness of Christ in rebuking awakens compunction in those to whom it is shown. A child who by severity is set on its defence or drawn into falsehood is often melted into full confession by being loved and trusted more than it deserves."*

S. Mark x. 1: "This verse covers the whole interval

* Latham, "Pastor Pastorum."

until the final visit to Jerusalem. It would seem as if it was the Galilean ministry which the writer had set himself to relate. For this Capernaum was the centre. There it began and ended."

Jesus Blessing Little Children (13-16).

"Jesus so often laid His hands on those He healed that the mothers thought it would be an advantage to their children to have them touched by the great Healer. The disciples knew how His time was taken up and His physical strength taxed by the numbers who were brought to Him to be cured, and here were people bringing to Him children that were perfectly well and asking Him to touch them. Such demands on Him were quite unreasonable. Moreover, how was He to find time to teach them if He was interrupted in this way?"* Compare with the next-come.

The Great Refusal (x. 17-22).

The disciples were elated at the arrival of this young man—bitterly disappointed at his departure. The young man had seen the vision and turned away, for the venture was too great. Everyone was sad—Jesus was sad, the young man was sad, and the disciples were sad. Show, if possible, a copy of Watts' picture, "For he had great possessions." The disciples did not understand, for they looked up to those who had money—to them it was most desirable. Jesus seems to regard it as of no importance, and often as a great hindrance.

Peter is puzzled and immediately says, "At any rate, we are all right; we have given up everything" (ver. 29-31). Let the class read the reply—*e.g.*, Bishop Patteson, Livingstone, S. Francis, Hindu Christians, and let them discover what they gave up and what they got in exchange.

On the Way to Jerusalem (32-45).

At times the words of Jesus threw the disciples into gloom and depression, and "they that followed were afraid"; but they quickly forgot.

They think that the journey to Jerusalem will end in the

* Plummer, p. 262.

establishment of the Kingdom, and their minds are full of the places and power which will certainly be theirs; perhaps James and John feel there is a danger of Peter being in front of them, and they try to secure the best places at once. Jesus seems to look upon His death as the climax of a life of service (ver. 45).

The Healing of Bartimæus (x. 46-52).

From Jericho, the city of palm-trees, to Bethany was eighteen miles up-hill. The road was usually very lonely and dangerous, but it would now be crowded with bands of pilgrims going to Jerusalem for the Passover—Bartimæus is among them. Now, apparently, there is a quiet Sabbath at Bethany with friends; in the evening there is a feast in Christ's honour (cf. John xii. 1-10). Everywhere the story of Jesus was told there was told, too, the story of the woman who gave Him not only an ordinary gift, but "just everything she could."

S. Mark has got now to the last week of the Lord's life; he remembers Peter telling him so much that he may have had difficulty in knowing what to put down.

The Triumphal Entry (xi. 1-11).

Picture the joy and delight of the disciples as they hear the "Hosannas" of the multitudes, and their wild excitement as the gathering crowds tear down the palm-branches and throw down their clothes for a carpet.

He is going to proclaim Himself a King at last. He enters the city, the roofs full of people crying, "Who is this?" At the entrance to the Temple Jesus dismounts and goes in. Little by little the crowd melts away; the great rising was not to take place that day. At eventide He goes back to Bethany with the Twelve—the colt sent back to its master—probably along the same road; the branches still lying about and beginning to wither, the disciples probably flat and tired, and talking little.

The Cleansing of the Temple (xi. 15-19).

The children should know that there was a large trade in Jerusalem in animals for sacrifice and other things required

for the Temple worship ; also, at festival times the foreign Jews would need money changed for the Temple tax of half a shekel. "But a certain high-priest, named Annas, devised a new scheme. The outer court of the Temple, the Court of the Gentiles, was a large open space. The purpose of this court was that people of all nations might come and pray to the God of the whole earth. Foreigners were not allowed on pain of death to enter any of the other courts ; but this court was built for their convenience. What Annas did was to let out this court to the salesmen. Thus the Court of the Gentiles became a noisy market, in which oxen, sheep, goats, pigeons, etc., were sold and money was exchanged. It was a great convenience to the worshippers ; the tradesmen made large profits ; while the chief priests made a comfortable income out of the rent."*

The story will appeal to children of this age. Picture as vividly as possible—

(1) The scene as Jesus enters the court—the cattle, the doves, the stalls, the tables of the money-changers, the stench and noise, the quarrels and cheating. How could anyone pray in a place like that?

(2) Jesus stood there, His voice clearly heard above the din ; the sheep being driven out ; the seats and tables overturned ; the coins rattling on the marble pavement ; the traders seizing the cages of doves and slinking away afraid ; the astonishment of the disciples, who are perhaps standing behind ; a priest in the distance muttering curses and running off to tell his fellows all about it.

(3) The stillness when all are gone ; then the blind and the lame coming round Him to be healed. Suddenly the court rings with children's voices singing "Hosanna."

The Next Day (27-33).

"We heard what you did in the Temple. What right have you to do such things? Whose authority do you claim?" Jesus answered : "I have only one point to raise first. Give Me My answer, and I will tell you My

* "College S. Matthew" (adapted), p. 151.

authority" (ver. 30, etc.). "Tell Me about the baptism and the authority of John—were they God's, or just invented by men? You are the proper people to answer that." They drew aside to talk it over, and answered: "We cannot tell."*

The Parable of the Wicked Husbandman (xii. 1-13).

His hearers have no difficulty in knowing what He means—let the children find out.

The Widow's Mite (ver. 41-44).

"They gave of their spare money without missing it, but all the woman had for her very life were two farthings, and she gave them both."†

The Feast of the Passover (xiv. 10-53).

"Where wilt Thou that we make ready?" "For they might anywhere, since the houses in Jerusalem were not to be hired, but during the time of the feast they were of common right."‡

The chief priests, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, who usually hated each other, were now united in a still fiercer hatred of Jesus. He must die. They found an unexpected ally among the Twelve. Let the children discuss why Judas betrayed his Master. Was it that he expected that Jesus would in the end confront His enemies, or that he was just tired of it all?

In the Upper Room and Afterwards.

Let the class read verses 13-33, and let them fill in some details from the other Gospels—*e.g.*, it was Peter and John who went off to get all ready. Let them picture the arrival: how the disciples sat, their faces showing what they had just been talking about; their consternation when they heard, "One of you shall betray Me"; Judas going out into the dark night; the institution of the Lord's Supper; the hymn; the quiet walk through the city gate, down the hill which was covered with little white tents,

* Pym, "Mark's Account of Jesus."

† *Ibid.*, p. 31.

‡ Lightfoot.

where thousands of pilgrims were sleeping. The talk on the way ; the beautiful garden ; Peter and the others falling asleep and failing their Master. Then the tramp of feet ; the sudden lights ; an armed band ; and the shock as they see Judas leading—he is the traitor. Let the children note the young man (ver. 51) ; this is generally supposed to be Mark himself. Many think that the Passover feast was held at the home of Mary his mother. . . . It is possible that Judas brought the soldiers there first ; finding the company gone, he followed to the garden, and Mark had rushed out into the dark night to try and warn Jesus : he may have arrived too late. “ They all forsook Him and fled ” ; but John turns round and follows to the high-priest’s house, and Peter too. S. Mark must have heard S. Peter tell the story of his fall again and again ; would he ever lose the feeling of shame ? There is an old legend that whenever he heard the cock crow he got up and prayed.

It is suggested that the children should not read chapter xv., for they have not yet the experience which will enable them to apprehend something of its meaning, and we would not have them read it unheedingly.

We can tell the story very briefly from the point of view of S. Peter. S. Mark does not tell us where Peter went after his fall, perhaps he never knew ; he may have set off to the open country.

The Cross.

Peter would hear how Jesus was led outside the city walls to Golgotha, and that there they crucified Him between two robbers, that over His head Pilate wrote the title “ This is the King of the Jews,” and that His enemies sat round and mocked Him and called out, “ He saved others, Himself He cannot save.” Peter would know of the strange darkness which came over the land, and they would tell him that at three o’clock on that Friday afternoon, as the light came again, Jesus died. Later on Joseph of Arimathæa, a ruler who had never been known as a disciple, went to Pilate and asked leave to take down the Body and lay it in his own tomb in a beautiful garden.

The Resurrection (xvi. 1-11).

Peter would go on to tell of that third morning, the first day of the week, when his sorrow was turned to joy. The women, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, went at early dawn to the sepulchre with spices and found it empty, and someone said to them: "Ye seek Jesus: He is risen: He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him."

To the scientists of to-day the empty tomb is no longer an impossibility. We cannot limit the power of spirit over matter; it may be that what we call matter is only one mode of the expression of the spirit. "The survival of personality after death may be a mystery to us, but its non-survival would be a greater mystery still. The life continues, though its mode of activities may be unknown. From time to time there come to us hints, suggestions, experiences rising in certain cases to profound convictions, that personality 'fights on, fares ever, there as here,' and that its influence, its very self, may still be present with us.

"If this is so even at the level of ordinary human experience, how much more should we be prepared to expect it in the case of such a personality as that of Jesus. The average soul at the time of its release from the body is stained with sinful thoughts, held by the limitations of evil habit and undeveloped character. But the soul of Jesus was perfect holiness, perfect love, dwelling even on earth in the divine eternal Spirit. When such an one, entrusted with such a world-significant mission of redemptive love, had won His way through to the world of ultimate realities, should we wonder if, compelled by that same love which inspired Him on earth, He desired and was able, even after death, to manifest Himself to those He so loved; if He should still be actively present in the spirits of those men and women who are in touch with the same divine Spirit?"*

S. Mark ends xvi. 8 with the words "they were afraid,"

* A. G., p. 19.

after that the oldest MSS. have a blank page. It is said that at one time there was only one copy of S. Mark in existence, so that it may well have become frayed or even had a piece torn off.

"An ancient Armenian MS. shows the last twelve verses of the Gospel actually spaced off from the rest; in the intervening space a line written in red containing the words 'Ariston Eridzon'—i.e., 'of Ariston, the Presbyter.' " *

S. PAUL.

Books to Read.

Furneaux, "The Acts of the Apostles."

Basil Matthews, "Paul the Dauntless."

"Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in perils of robbers, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. xi. 25-27).

The children are at an age when they revel in adventure. We can find no more thrilling story than that of S. Paul as described above, but how easily we can make it dull! It matters little whether the children can repeat the details of his journeys; it matters much that they catch something of that spirit of devotion to his Master which never let him rest until he had carried the Gospel to the western extremity of the Roman Empire.

His Early Life (Acts xxi. 39; Gal. i. 14).

While Jesus was working in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, Saul was growing up in far-away Tarsus. Picture the scene in its streets: camels with their loads; droves of laden donkeys; Arab drivers shouting hoarse cries; black buffaloes dragging lumbering waggons; on the quay sailors from different countries, ships going out, etc. His father being a strict Jew, Saul went to the synagogue school. Also, like every Jewish boy, he learnt a trade—tent-making—the local industry.

* Findlay, p. 38.

He must have been clever at his books, for his father decided he should be a teacher (Rabbi) and have every advantage. Where would he go to study? Jerusalem, where his teacher Gamaliel might soon have picked him out as one who would be a leader, a good speaker, etc.

His studies completed, he probably returned home.

Saul and Stephen (Acts vi. ; vii. 54-viii. 4).

For the first time he comes into S. Luke's story. He goes back to Jerusalem. What does he find? Someone, a Galilæan, had been preaching there who claimed to be the Messiah; the chief priests had crucified Him, but His followers declared He had risen again and was alive and with them still. Saul even found some who believed in Him in the synagogue to which he belonged, amongst them a young man, Stephen. Picture Saul listening horrified to his teaching—*e.g.*, that God could be worshipped in other places, and not only in the Temple: "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

Let the children recall the story of the trial and death of Stephen, and of the persecution which followed. "No sooner had they been scattered from Jerusalem, or driven into hiding in its cellars and secret places, than news came that they were appearing in other towns, and wherever they went were speaking of their Lord. The tidings from Damascus were especially serious, for here quite a little colony of those belonging to 'the Way' had soon established themselves. Saul determined to root them out, and obtained letters from the high-priest giving him authority to bring the offenders bound to Jerusalem."*

His Conversion (Acts ix. 1-9).

Picture Saul riding to Damascus, six days' journey (140 miles). What would his thoughts be? He probably pressed on to finish the journey before the Sabbath. At noontide he drew near the city, which lay like a beautiful island in the plain below. Tell the story. Cf. xxii. 1-11; xxvi. 9-19.

* Gillie, "Kinsfolk and Friends of Jesus," p. 289.

The Story of Ananias (ix. 10-19).

Probably he had heard of Saul being led through the streets, so different an arrival from what was expected, and was wondering whether he should go and inquire after him, and yet was afraid.

The story should awaken the children to the wonderful possibilities that may lie within their reach of helping others. The world is full of people wanting help, and there is no limit to what God can do if we let Him work through us. Ananias was listening and ready to obey: "Behold, I am here, Lord." Many of us do not listen. We pass through life and never see our chances.

Saul's Preparation for his Work: Twelve Years (ix. 19-30; Gal. i. 17).

We are not quite sure what happened in these years, but apparently—

- (1) Saul began to preach at once in Damascus, to the amazement of his hearers, and later
- (2) He seems to have gone to Arabia, to be alone and to think (Gal. i. 17-18), like his Master (Matt. iv. ; cf. Moses).
- (3) Then back to Damascus, where he again preached with great power. The Jews could not refute him, so they determined to murder him. "Saul, never careless of his life, though always ready, if need be, to risk it, resolved to flee. But it was no private plot, hatched by irresponsible persons. The Governor was privy to it; the gates were watched, and escape was not easy."* His friends saved his life. "One of them secured a house on the wall with a window looking out across the country. Through this they lowered him in a basket. He reached the ground safely, and vanished in the darkness."†
- (4) He went to Jerusalem. Anxious to see Peter. Why?

* Furneaux, p. 138.

† Gillie, p. 297.

- (i.) He had been with Jesus, and would tell Saul about Him. No Gospels written then.
- (ii.) He also had sinned and been forgiven.

Were Saul's friends in Jerusalem glad to see him? (ix. 26). They were afraid he might be pretending to be a Christian. Where can he go?

- (5) To Tarsus. How would his father receive him? Would they have him at home? Imagine his feelings, longing to tell everyone about Jesus Christ; there seems no work for him.

His Work Begins (xi. 19-30).

At last the call comes. Picture Barnabas arriving at his house, telling the story of what had happened at Antioch: "Will you come? I cannot go on alone."

Antioch Third City of the Empire.—Which were the other two? Rome and Alexandria. "It contained half a million people of mixed nationalities. Two celebrated names are connected with it—Ignatius and Chrysostom. Early in the second century Ignatius was given to the lions at Rome."* "Christians" (ver. 26). "Because one name was constantly on their lips, the outside world called them by it."

xiii. 1-3: One day in Antioch a service was being held; among the gathering of worshippers was a group of prophets and teachers. They had been praying for guidance, for some felt they had been keeping the good news to themselves too long. Now the answer came. "The Holy Spirit said" (doubtless through one of the prophets) Barnabas and Saul must go—their two best men.

First Missionary Journey with Barnabas (xiii.-xiv.).

N.B.—It is not advisable to spend much time on the details of the journey, or they become wearisome to the children.

There is a gathering of the whole Church to release Saul and Barnabas from their duties in Antioch, and with fasting and prayer and laying on of hands they depart.

* Furneaux, p. 175.

The Holy Spirit sent them forth; the Church released them from their work.

Let the children think of Saul's delight in being sent at last to the work for which he had longed. Picture him and Barnabas with a map, discussing where they should go first. Barnabas probably suggests Cyprus. Why? (His native place.) Their extra hand, John Mark.

Cyprus (xiii. 4-13).—Probably stayed there many weeks, and then sailed to Perga. John Mark leaves them; we wonder why. Was he afraid of hardships or was he homesick?

Antioch (14-52).—Try and picture to the children how Paul and Barnabas would set to work in a strange place; no difficulty with language, as everyone understood Greek. What would they do first? Look for lodgings. Did not begin by preaching in the streets; always waited until the Sabbath, when they could go into the synagogue. Why? Because as Jews they would be allowed to speak there.

Picture the scene in the synagogue: the crowd round the door; afterwards (ver. 42) sensation in the city. The next Sabbath the place crowded (ver. 44). The Jews, filled with jealousy, contradicted and reviled Paul. His words: "We turn to the Gentiles." The result. The Jews stir up a persecution. "The disciples were filled with joy," for "There is more in Christ to make us glad than there is in all the world beside to make us sad."

Iconium (xiii. 51, xiv. 1-6).—Think of the two plodding along the Roman road to Iconium, sixty miles distant. Stayed peacefully six months (xiv. 2). Why did they leave?

Lystra (xiv. 6-20).—Eighteen miles farther. The lame man healed; the effect on the people. Headed by the priest of Jupiter, they bring a garlanded ox to the place of sacrifice. Barnabas and Paul—Jupiter and his spokesman Mercury.

Imagine the horror of the two missionaries; they sprang forth into the crowd expostulating (ver. 14-18). Their enemies from Antioch came after them and won over the crowd. Paul is stoned and left for dead. He returned to

the city for the night unmolested; went a little farther, and then retraced his steps along the same road, comforting his friends and appointing elders in the various Churches (ver. 19-25). Picture their return to Antioch. A meeting is called to welcome them. What would they have to tell? (ver. 26-28; cf. 2 Cor. xi. 24-28).

**The Council at Jerusalem (xv.).*—To understand the hatred with which the Jews pursued Paul the children must remember something of the scorn with which they regarded the rest of the world. The Christian Jews still felt the Messiah had come for *them*; the Gentiles might enter the Church, but only by becoming Jews and keeping Jewish rules. S. Paul felt the Church was to be universal; Gentiles and Jews were to be equally welcome. Stephen was the first to see this. S. Peter saw it too, after his vision.

Feeling has run high in the Church at Antioch during the absence of Paul and Barnabas; they hear this on their return. There was a danger that the Church would be split in two. It was resolved that the Church at Jerusalem should be consulted; delegates are sent, amongst whom are Paul and Barnabas. At Jerusalem the Church Council is summoned. Picture the scene: The chairman, James; the heated argument. Peter speaks; then Barnabas and Paul tell their wonderful story of the conversion of the Gentiles. James gives the decision. See the special letter (ver. 23-29). Note verse 28: "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

Second Missionary Journey (xv. 35-xviii. 22). Probably 50 A.D.

1. *S. Paul starts off again.*—Why? No posts to bring him news from his lately made friends of how they fare. Those left in charge of Churches had only had a few weeks' training. His new companion. Let the children discuss xv. 37-41.

2. *Journey by Land.*—On the way Timothy allowed to come too. Let the children trace journey along the Roman roads through Syria, Cilicia, to the Galatian Churches of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch; thence by Mysia to

Troas. S. Paul was led across Asia—*i.e.*, the Roman province, from the south-east to the extreme north-west, and yet was prevented from preaching in it. The "Spirit of Jesus" guided them. The children might think how they would set to work to evangelize India; would they go first to cities, to the educated or to the outcastes?

3. Paul, Silas, and Timothy arrived at the seaport Troas, Paul not knowing where to go next. Probably ill, obliged to consult a doctor. Whom do we find at Troas? Luke, a doctor from Philippi (see p. 163). Note the change from "they" (xvi. 8) to "we" (ver. 10).

4. *The Vision at Night* (xvi. 8-10).—The missionary call. Paul eager to depart. Luke goes with him (see p. 163). "The physician was acquainted with the roads, the cities, and the people, and would make it easier to begin the work."

5. *At Philippi* (xvi. 12-40).—Tell how the four left the port and tramped along the road over the hills to the important town of Philippi, a Roman colony—"a military settlement of veterans who had farms assigned them."* No synagogue. Tell of little congregation of women by river-side, among them Lydia, with whom Paul stayed, a seller of the famous purple dye. She was baptized.

Story of the Insane Girl } (xvi. 16-40).
 Story of the Jailor }

Roman citizenship could be inherited, given as a reward for public service, or bought. It gave many privileges—exemption from the degrading punishments—*e.g.*, scourging and crucifixion—and the right to appeal to Cæsar against a local magistrate.

6. *Adventures at Thessalonica* (xvii. 1-9).—Modern Salonica. At Beræa (10-15).

* 7. *At Athens* (16-34).—S. Paul alone for the first time. Show postcards if possible, and describe the city—the mighty rock crowned by the white marble Parthenon, the temples and statues, the Stadium where the races were

* London was a Roman colony, so was Lincoln, which keeps the trace of this fact in its name; as also Colne (Benson).

run, the market-place, the people given over to idolatry. Picture S. Paul walking about the city, the beauty of which failed to touch him because his mind was so filled with the problem "How to bring the Greeks to the knowledge of the true God." He went into the market-place and began to talk; for a little while they listened to him, but it was too serious for them; some walked away and others said politely, "We will hear you again." He felt he had been a dead failure, though it was not so entirely, for certain men and a woman believed. The argument of S. Paul's well-known speech is beyond the children.

8. *Corinth* (xviii. 1-22).—Eighteen months there. Commercial city. The story of Corinth can be made very interesting. S. Paul works with Priscilla and Aquila. He is alone, no money, depressed; let the children think why. (i.) His failure at Athens. (ii.) Miserably anxious about the Thessalonians. Recall the visit to them, the three months' stay, the sudden departure, for the magistrates had pledged themselves he should not return. S. Paul writes his first letter (1 Thess.) to say how glad he is. Picture the Thessalonians receiving it, dramatize the scene, and let one of the children be the messenger and bring in the letter. The arrival of his friends brings new energy to S. Paul.

"A stormy period of some length is compressed by Luke into one dramatic moment"* (see xviii. 6).

(a) *The Vision* (9-11).—"From the hour of his landing in Europe he encountered little but danger and disappointment. Scourged and imprisoned at Philippi; hounded by a mob out of Thessalonica; forced to make a hasty escape from Beræa; met with indifference and contempt at Athens."† Should he have any better success here? This vision changed everything.

(b) *Story of Gallio* (12-17).—A Roman noble of high character. Henceforth Paul was assured of the protection of the law. Corinth was the first city on this tour where persecution failed against him.

(c) *The Return Journey* (18-22).—Let the children trace

* Furneaux, p. 297.

† *Ibid.*, p. 298.

route across Ægean Sea to Ephesus, where his friends are left. Cæsarea and Jerusalem, Antioch.

* **THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY** (xviii. 23, xix. 8-41).

We usually speak of three missionary journeys, but to S. Paul the second and third were all one, though he did return to Antioch for a short visit.

1. *Arrival of Timothy*.—(a) He brings bad news from the Churches in Galatia (Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, etc.).

It is generally held that "the Epistle to the Galatians was written just as he was starting on his third missionary journey."*

(b) Decides to follow it up himself.

2. *Route on Map*.—Galatia and Phrygia to Ephesus (Acts xviii. 23).

3. *The Two Years in Ephesus* (xix. 8-41).—This story can be made very thrilling. There is an interesting theory that Romans xvi., with its many greetings, is really a letter of commendation introducing Phœbe to the Church in Ephesus. S. Paul had a wonderful gift for making friends wherever he went; the children might be interested to make a list of his friends and put what they know about each one. There are indications that the people of Ephesus soon forgot him; it is John rather than Paul who is now associated with that city. Probably from Ephesus the first letter to Corinth was written (see p. 144).

The Journey Back to Jerusalem (xx.-xxi. 1-15).

1. *Objects*.—(a) To keep the feast of Pentecost there.

(b) To carry a collection from the Gentile Churches to the poor Jews (Rom. xv. 25-26). They were willing to send money to people they had not seen. This was quite a new idea, due to Christianity.

(1) S. Paul's way of raising money (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2). Cf. modern ways—entertainments, etc.

(2) How the money was to get to Jerusalem (1 Cor. xvi. 3-4).

* Ramsay.

2. *Alternative Routes to Syria* (xx. 1-17; see map).

(a) From Corinth straight by sea. This abandoned on account of plot discovered to murder him; with a shipload of hostile Jews this would have been easy to effect.

(b) Round by Troas, where he met the delegates, and down the Ægean. "The ship evidently stopped every evening; the reason lies in the wind, which in the Ægean during the summer generally blows from the north, beginning at a very early hour in the morning; in the afternoon dies away; at sunset there is a dead calm, and thereafter a gentle south wind arises and blows during the night."*

3. *Miletus* (xx. 17-38).—A messenger is sent to Ephesus: "Paul is on the way back to Jerusalem; meet him at Miletus" (fifty miles away). "Suggest the joy with which the Christians heard the message; how the chief of them prepared to go to Miletus; how they waited in joyful anticipation the coming of the ship. Tell briefly the story Paul would have told of the journey to Corinth; the three months there with the people about whom he had been so anxious, but who had now given up the evil things that had harmed them; the great collection finished; the plot; the way he had escaped; the fact that those very Jews would be waiting for him at Jerusalem. Tell of the prayer together, and the sorrowful parting. And as the Ephesian Christians turned back to Ephesus, Paul's words rang again and again in their minds."†

4. *At Tyre* for a week.

5. *Cæsarea*.—At Philips's house (see p. 165).

At Jerusalem (xxi. 17-40, xxiii. 1-30). Seven days' stay.

N.B.—The speeches should be given shortly, generally in the teacher's own words.

1. Friendly reception (xxi. 17-19).

2. Seized and beaten by a hostile mob; Trophimus (xxi. 27-31).

Inscription on stone found 1871: "No man of another nation to enter within the fence and enclosure round the

* Ramsay.

† M. Pelton, *T. and T.*

Temple, and whoever is caught will have himself to blame that his death ensues."

3. Rescued by Roman soldiers, who poured down from the castle of Antonio. The mob listened to the speech until the word Gentile was mentioned. "The word they hated could no longer be kept back; it fell like a spark into a magazine. There was an instant explosion of fanatical rage. They did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, but it was not His name that roused their fury; it was that a Jew, who claimed that the Messiah had come, should assert that he was sent by Him to set up His Kingdom among the Gentiles"* (xxi. 32-xxii. 21).

* *At Cæsarea*.—Two years (xxii. 23-xxvi.).

1. *Trial under Felix*.—(a) Charges (xxiv. 5-6); (b) Felix and Drusilla hear with interest, but will not let him go because (24-27)—(i.) They hope for bribes; (ii.) They were anxious to please the Jews.

2. *Trial under Festus*.—(a) Plot to kill S. Paul frustrated (xxv. 1-5); (b) Appeal to Cæsar allowed (xxv. 6-12); (c) Interview with Agrippa and Bernice (xxvi. 24-32).

Let the children notice Paul's perfect courtesy during the interview. Note verses 28 and 29: "With little labour you will make me a Christian." "S. Paul ignores the gibe in the word 'Christian,' substituting 'such as I am'; 'like me in my faith and joy and hope'; and with recollection of the right thing to say, adds, as he lifts with a smile his manacled hands: 'Only not like me in this chain.' "†

The Voyage and Shipwreck (xxvii.-xxviii. 1-10).

The most detailed account of an ancient voyage we possess. S. Luke, who writes it, possibly allowed to go as S. Paul's slave or doctor. A convoy of condemned prisoners were on board, probably to take part in gladiatorial shows and to be thrown to the lions; also Julius of the Emperor's bodyguard, who was in charge.

1. *Cæsarea to Myra*—in coasting ship (xxvii. 1-5).

2. *Myra to Fair Havens* (6-8).

* Furneaux, p. 355.

† *Ibid.*, p. 391.

(a) Prisoners transferred from Myra to a large corn-ship from Egypt (the Canada of the Roman world).

(b) Meeting to decide where to winter (9-12).

Navigation not possible from November to March. S. Paul had already been shipwrecked three times, and advises them to stop at Fair Havens, but his advice is rejected.

3. *The Shipwreck* (xxvii. 13-44).—The rest decide to make for a better harbour. They start, and the vessel is struck by a north-east squall and blown out to sea. Only one clumsy sail, they are in great danger from floundering in the open sea, or of being blown on the Syrtis on the north coast of Africa. S. Luke helps to haul in the boat (ver. 16). Round Cauda calmer sea makes it possible to hold the ship together with ropes. Ship drifts helplessly; tables, benches, chests, etc., thrown out; all hope given up. S. Paul encourages his fellow-passengers, and on the fourteenth day they hear the breakers of Malta. All land safely.

4. *The Stay at Malta (three months)* (xxviii. 1-10).—Note "Barbarian" means "not Roman."

5. *The Coming to Rome* (11-16).—Paul and his friends leave Malta and arrive at Puteoli, the regular port for the Alexandrian corn-ships. They stayed there seven days; the soldiers may have required new outfits. From this point they travelled thirty miles by land.

Then begins the last walk to Rome; Appii Forum ninety miles from Puteoli, forty miles from Rome. Busy little town. Imagine his feelings. A group of men greet Paul. They are Christians from Rome.

Seven miles farther on another band meets him. He thanked God and took courage.

"Their road lay along the Appian way" (the most important highway out of Rome), "lined with monuments to the illustrious dead, by which many a Roman general had passed, in his triumph, to the Capitol. Paul walked along it a prisoner in chains, yet a greater conqueror than any before him." At the end of the last twelve miles of

straight road they see the buildings of the city—beautiful marble, the Forum, the citadel on the hill—Rome at last. If possible, show the children postcards of the Appian Way and Rome, that they may realize a little of what S. Paul saw.

S. Paul in Rome (xxviii. 16-31).

He was allowed to live by himself ; but it must have been a grievous trial to a man like S. Paul “to have, for two whole years, night and day, eating and sleeping, talking or praying, a soldier chained to him. . . .”^{*} How Paul felt the annoyance is shown by the fact that every one of the Epistles of the Captivity contains an allusion to his chain.

Tell briefly of his life in Rome ; where can we find particulars? From his letters (see p. 145). Tell of the friends who came to see him, of his talks with the Roman guards, the coming of Epaphroditus, etc.

We do not know for certain what happened at the end of the two years ; probably he was free for a time and visited some of his friends, and carried the gospel to the Far West. It is thought he was arrested and imprisoned again in Rome.

End of S. Paul's Life (1 and 2 Tim.).

These letters were very much torn and illegible when they were found, and probably other people had added bits to them. From them we get a vivid picture of the last imprisonment. The children can probably build up the story. “A fireless cell—and it can be bitterly cold in Rome in winter.” He asks for his cloak, his garments being threadbare. His case has come on for the first hearing, and he has been remanded ; he has no friends to stand by him. He is weary ; no new thoughts in his letter. “Do try hard to come to me—come soon ; I am very lonely ; for Demas hath abandoned me. He clung to the present world. . . . Luke is with me—none beside.” Free translation.

^{*} Furneaux.

He knows the end is near. "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith." "According to tradition, one day in the winter of 65 A.D. he was led out on the Ostian Way and there beheaded. Tradition marks the spot amongst the cypress-trees at the Abbey of Tres Fontane, three miles from the city gate; and his body was laid where now stands the great Church of S. Paolo Fuori le Mura (without the walls)."* Under the altar excavations were made some years ago, and a plain stone was found on which was inscribed: "Pavlo Apostolo Mart."

His desire is fulfilled. "I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for it is very far better" (Phil. i. 23).

S. PAUL'S EPISTLES. (These can be taken in Year VII.).

Read: "The New Testament Background."

In these lessons the teacher's aim should be to leave the impression that the Epistles are real letters written in the first century to real people living in places we can find on the map. Cf. child's experience of any letters received at home.

Thirteen Letters Divided into Four Groups. (Some think that the authorship of the fourth group is uncertain.)

A. First Group: 1 and 2 Thessalonians (52 or 53 A.D.).

1 Thessalonians.

Let the teacher prepare by reading Acts xvii. 1-10 and the first Epistle straight through. Revise visit to Thessalonica (see map).

(a) Picture S. Paul's arrival; 100 miles' walk from Philippi, suffering from the effects of the Roman beating. The three months' stay—preaching and teaching. Sudden departure—caused by enemies stirring up the people and charging him with disloyalty to the Emperor.

(b) At Athens he is afraid the Thessalonians will forget his teaching. He cannot go back to them

* E. N. Brown, "The Pastoral Epistles."

(the magistrates have given their word that he will stay away), but longs to know how they are, and sends Timothy; the latter at last returns to him (at Corinth) with good news. They are standing firm and trying to do what he told them. Read chapter i., putting the words in modern language when necessary (ii. 1, 2, 9, 17; iii. 2, 5, 6; iv. 9, 11; v. 15-18, 25-28).

B. Second Group of Epistles: Galatians; 1 and 2 Corinthians; Romans. (Of these the last three belong to the third journey.)

Let the children find the district and towns on the map.

1. *Galatians.*

(a) The central part of Asia Minor is a vast tableland, between 2,000 and 4,000 feet above the level of the sea. In the north-east part is Galatia; from the south this rude and uninviting province could only be approached by crossing the snowy range of Mount Taurus. The most accessible of its passes, the Cilician Gates, is eighty miles in length and breaks through the range between mountains of 10,000 feet. Its narrow gorges covered with pines and oak. Crouching in these black, trackless woods were the wild Isaurian and Pisidian robbers.

(b) They were a warm-hearted, impressionable people. S. Paul had taken their hearts by storm; there is nothing they would not have given him.

(c) Later, he hears they have forgotten what he said and have accepted other teaching, so he writes a letter. Read Gal. i. 1, 2, 6: "My little children, I am perplexed about you" (iv. 20, vi. 17). Let the children choose a few verses to learn from chapters v. and vi.

2. *1 Corinthians.*

(a) Describe Corinth. What would a tourist now see? A hill behind, 2,000 feet high—the rocky

shelf beneath desolate. Once there were 400,000 inhabitants, two harbours (see map). The Venice of the then world; sailors, merchants, slaves, passing from harbour to harbour carrying cargoes across or hauling ships. Describe the Isthmian games—the prize, a wreath of laurel leaves (1 Cor. ix. 24-26).

- (b) See p. 137; Acts xviii. 1-17. How did the Christians at Corinth get on after S. Paul left? Apparently they began to quarrel. The children might like to learn 1 Cor. xiii.

3. *2 Corinthians.*

Some said St. Paul was not really an Apostle. Can the class find his answer? (2 Cor. xi. 24-27).

4. *Romans.* Revise description of Rome and remind the children how S. Paul longed to get there (Rom. i., 7, 8, 13). Some of the letter might be learnt: Rom. xii. 9-21 is suggested.

C. *Third Group: Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, and Ephesians.*

Let the children find out for themselves that they were all written from prison. Recall the story of Acts xxviii. "Hired house" = a floor or a portion of a floor in one of those big boarding-houses which have always been a feature of Rome. Here he lived, chained to a soldier, but free to think, to write (mostly dictation; cf. Col. iv. 18), to speak; his friends might visit him, and those who wished to hear him talk might assemble. Cf. "Stone walls do not a prison make," and Bunyan's work in prison.

1. *Philippians* (Acts xvi. 11-40).

- (a) Why the letter was written.

Picture how one day a visitor, Epaphroditus, arrived, bringing money for the fourth time, from the town of Philippi. Let the children dramatize the scene. (See map.) Who could have sent it?—

the jailor, Lydia, etc. Letter of thanks delayed; why? Messenger ill. On his recovery it is sent (ii. 25-30).

- (b) Letter. The Philippians not to be discouraged.
- (i.) He feels happy whenever he thinks of them (i. 3-6).
 - (ii.) They need not worry because he is in prison; his work is not stopped. He has a great opportunity of preaching amongst the household troops (i. 12-13).
 - (iii.) He may be released or have his head cut off. If he is to lose his life, he sometimes thinks how glad he will be to be always with Jesus, "for it is very far better." If the former, he will be able to teach them a little longer. He does not know which he would choose; he is happy whatever happens.
 - (iv.) Repetition Phil. iv. 4-10.

2. *Philemon* (a private letter to a friend at Colosse).

Why the letter was written. Let the children look at it, and build up the story for themselves.

Onesimus, slave of Philemon, a friend of S. Paul, robbed his master and ran away to Rome; he finds his way to S. Paul with his story, and turns over a new leaf. S. Paul finds him very useful, but feels he must not keep him. Let the children discuss what was the best thing to do. Onesimus must go back (800 miles) and confess his fault. To make things easier, S. Paul gives him a letter (a slave in those days could be tortured or beaten to death). Onesimus is a Christian now, and Christians are all brothers. This note was probably sent with a letter to the Church at Colosse.

3. *Ephesians*.

- (a) Addressed "to the saints which are (in Ephesus)"; early MSS. omit the bracketed words. Prob-

ably a circular letter. Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province, received it first; then it was sent on to smaller towns.

- (b) Central idea of the Epistle. The new family to which all nations might belong.

Let the class find special messages to children and slaves, and to those who feel cross with others (vi., iv.).

THE BIBLE.

Derivation, "Biblia"; originally plural noun = "books."

1. *"Two Shelves of Books by Many Writers."*—One shelf by Hebrew writers, the other in Greek. It might be well to copy some of the Hebrew and Greek letters of the alphabet on the blackboard for the children to see.

2. *When Written.*—(a) The writers of the Hebrew shelf lived, roughly speaking, during the period 1100 B.C. to 100 B.C.

(b) The writers of the Greek shelf lived during the period 50 A.D. to 100 A.D.

3. *Contents of the Shelves.*—(a) Hebrew shelf. Stories of national heroes, State records, codes of law, poetry, proverbs, drama.

(b) Greek shelf, Memoirs of Jesus Christ, Letters, Apocalypse.

"It took about 800 years for the Bible (the Old Testament) to grow up. Think what a long time this is. In 1066 the Battle of Hastings was fought, and William the Conqueror was King of England. Imagine a book begun while William the Conqueror was King of England and finished when Victoria was Queen, and you have an idea of how long it took before the Bible was finished. . . . The oldest bit is not on the first page or the latest bit on the last—the ages are jumbled up together, and most of the many books are themselves growths, with old bits in them, and new bits, and in-between bits as well."*

The Unity of the Bible.

The Bible is a record of the Revelation of God to man

* Montefiore, p. 2 (adapted).

through man. This is the thread which binds all these different books into one whole.

"Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost."

"The revelation of God is not made by a miraculous dictation of words and sentences: it is made through human lives and human thoughts. You may take your little sister's hand in your stronger hand and squeeze her fingers against a pen and make her write what you choose. That was not God's way."*

The writers of the books of the Bible lived near God, and became able to understand truths about Him, and then wrote them down in their own words (see Isaiah, Amos, etc.). They were "God's penmen, not His pens."

Early Songs.

"The literature of every people begins with legends or tales. . . . These recite the deeds of their national heroes, and formed the elementary education of the young before writing and reading were invented—*e.g.*, Norwegian Saga, the stories of Homer, the Arthurian Legends."

The oldest song in the Bible is supposed to be the Song of Deborah (eleventh century B.C., Judg. v.). Let the children read it and find others: The Song of Moses (Exod. xv. 1-22); the Song of the Bow (2 Sam. i. 17-27); the Song of the Battle of Beth-horon (Josh. x. 12-14)—the two last taken from the Book of Jasher.

It would be well to bring out here the point that poetry is not necessarily true in a literal sense. Figures of speech are essential to it. Let the children give instances from the recitations they know—*e.g.*, "Footprints on the Sands of Time." Note that Eastern peoples are very fond of imagery and use it in everyday conversation—*e.g.*, "the sun stood still" (Josh. x. 12, 13), "the floods clap their hands" (Ps. xcvi. 8).

* Armitage Robinson.

HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT GREW.

Scene I.

Picture the Jews living in olden times, in wild, open country, with their flocks and herds. When the sheep and goats had eaten up all the grass, the camp was moved on. Let the children describe a removal to-day and its varied contents. *Cf.* with possessions of a nomadic people—goat-skins, tents, rugs for sleeping in, utensils for cooking, no furniture, no books—not even story-books. Let the children picture how the days were spent; no school, but at night round the camp-fire someone told stories and they sang songs. How did they know the stories? They were not in a book. They had been told and retold by their fathers and grandfathers till they were known by heart; they were about their heroes.

Scene II.

The curtain lifts, many hundred years later, on these same people living in towns. The Jews have now a country of their own. This country is Canaan, to which they had been led by Moses and Joshua. Let the children give the names of some of their great men. Who were their first Kings? The kingdom was now divided into two parts, the North and the South—the land of Israel and the land of Judah. The Jews had learnt writing from the Canaanites, who wrote on bricks (Tel-el-Amarna tablets).*

They had never forgotten the old stories, and some of the songs had been written down.† Somewhere about the time that Elijah was preaching there lived in Judah a

* Emmett, "The New Lessons Explained," p. 109.

† These were probably written on skins of animals, and later writings on papyrus. "Perhaps the commonest ancient method was to take such skins and make a length, sometimes as great as 50 yards by about $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards wide, and keep it rolled up on a stick. This was called a volume. 'Volume' = 'rolled-up' (*volvo* = roll). . . . All sorts of things have been used—plates of lead and copper, the bark of trees, bricks, stone, wood, the leaves of palm and other trees, the Egyptian papyrus, the skins of goats and sheep, linen, silk and horn. The verses of Hesiod, the earliest Greek poet, were written on tables of lead; the laws of Solon on wooden planks."

prophet who was a great story-teller. He began to collect together all the stories which people could tell him about their nation. Let the children recall these stories of Abraham and Joseph, of Cain and Abel, and of the wonderful things Moses did in Egypt. He wrote them all down on papyrus, and amongst them were stories of the beginning of the world, which the Jews had learnt from the Babylonians. He did not like these very much because they spoke of many gods, and he knew there was only One. So he wrote a story of his own as to how the world was made, and another in which he tried to explain why people ever became unhappy or sad, or felt that they had done wrong and were sorry for it. This writer had one special name for God—Yahweh=Jehovah. The Hebrew word translated into English is LORD.

This story-book or history-book is always called "J," because it was written in Judæa, and its name for God is Jehovah (c. 850 B.C.).

A hundred years later, in the country of Ephraim, the north of Israel, there lived another prophet who was interested in stories. He found more stories which he wrote out—the story of Hagar and Ishmael and the sacrifice of Isaac. He also wrote down differently some of those already known.

This story-book or history-book is called "E," because its name for God is Elohim, translated God (c. 750 B.C.).

Scene III. (250 Years Later.)

(a) Picture Israel being carried into captivity, a long line of weary prisoners, each day farther from the homes which many of them will never see again. They are carrying with them a few of their possessions, and one man hides under his cloak something very precious. What can it be? It is not gold or jewels, but rolls of papyrus.

(b) Some years have passed. The people are not badly treated, but their home-sickness is intense. They have no Temple to go to on the Sabbath day, but they sometimes meet by the water-side. One day a man who used to be

a priest in the Temple tries to comfort them. He cannot offer sacrifices, but he can read to them stories about their country. "You must not lose heart," he says; "some day we shall go home. I will read you some of the stories of our brave men of long ago." How they loved to hear them. Later the priest went home and asked some of his friends to help him to write out the stories again. This they did, but they found stories about the same men in both history-books. They cut pieces out of each and joined them together, and they do not always fit. When we find the two stories joined together they are called J E.

Let the children examine the two stories of Joseph and of the flood.* Perhaps when the priest read J's story of how God created the world he did not feel quite satisfied with it, just as J so long before had not felt satisfied with the Babylonians' version; so he wrote one of his own, which is more beautiful than the other, and rather like a piece of poetry. And this writer we call P, and we find his story of the creation in Gen. i.-ii. 4, and J in Gen. ii. 4-25, as arranged by the final editor. Let the children read them.

N.B.—Children who have learnt the Creation story in this way will not be disturbed by the oft-repeated saying that the Bible and science contradict each other.

Genesis i.-ii. 4 is a Hymn of Creation. "Viewed scientifically, this picture of the universe is out of its true perspective, and the order of development is here and there inaccurate—how in that far-away age could it be otherwise?—but for its purpose these features are irrelevant. The true value of the Creation Psalm, perhaps, is seen best when we compare it with similar fragments of Creation literature among surrounding nations, and notice its unapproached suggestiveness and spiritual beauty."†

* *The story of Joseph* (Gen. xxxvii.). In E Joseph is kidnapped by Midianites out of a pit, while in J the brothers sell him to a caravan of Ishmaelites (J, ver. 2b-4, 12-18, 21, 25-27, 28b, 31-35; E, ver. 5-11, 19, 20, 22, 24, 28a, 29, 30-36). The story of the Flood is J and P.

† Peake, p. 12.

The Bible tells us that God created the world; science tells us He created it by the method of evolution.

"So far as modern science enables us to trace the method of God's creation, we learn that the solar system began as a nebula, formed of gaseous matter. This nebula gradually condensed and became a number of planets, whirling round a central sun. The earth, which was one of these planets, cooled, and at a certain stage in the process elementary forms of life appeared. These forms of life showed a capacity to develop. As they did so, they became ever more complex, until finally man was produced as the result of a process of evolution. . . . He alone among living animals consciously strives for goodness, beauty, and truth.

". . . We need not be afraid of the thought that in the process of evolution a non-spiritual animal, with a consciousness that vanished with bodily death, has developed a personality that is both spiritual and immortal. The beginning of the change eludes our understanding. Like the beginning of time, or matter, or the solar system, or terrestrial life, it is obscure. But we must not minimize the difference."*

JONAH.

Introduction.—I. Before we begin to teach Jonah, it would be worth while to spend some time helping the children to see how great teachers in all ages have reached their hearers through stories the truth of which does not depend on actual history. They will learn to understand that a story can be spiritually true, though it never really happened. Let them look through S. Mark's and S. Luke's Gospels, and see how often our Lord taught by means of a story—*e.g.*:

The Good Samaritan (Luke x. 30-37).

The Two Debtors (Matt. xviii. 21-35).

Let the children read the stories and discover what our Lord wanted to teach through them (Luke x. 29).

A good beginning is a lesson on John Bunyan: (1)

* Barnes, "Spiritualism and the Christian Faith," p. 11.

Bunyan shut up in prison, forbidden to preach. (2) Longing to tell the people they must set off for the Celestial City. (3) How could he reach them? Let the children think. (4) He wrote a story about a man called Christian and his journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. Let the children think what it means.

2. Hundreds of years before Bunyan there lived an unknown prophet who loved his nation as much as Bunyan loved the people of Bedford.

The Jews thought they were the only nation whom God cared for; they hated the heathen; but to this prophet came the wonderful thought, "God cares for all the nations of the earth; all are His children and dear to Him." How could he get his countrymen to understand this? What do people like best to hear or read? A story. So he made up a thrilling story. Many people have made a mistake in thinking it history because he took for his hero a man called Jonah, who lived just after the time of Elisha (2 Kings xiv. 25).

Story.—Jonah is sent by God to Nineveh to warn it of the coming judgment; he refuses, and in order to escape from His presence sets sail for Tarshish, which represented a great distance. Note the generous behaviour of the heathen sailors. He is swallowed by a great fish. After "three days" Jonah is released, and this time obeys God and goes to Nineveh. To his great displeasure the city repents and the impending evil is averted. He, however, waits outside the city to see what may happen. A gourd suddenly grows up, but withers away the next day. Jonah again shows anger, but this time, however, mingled with pity for the gourd. God shows him the evil of his conduct. If Jonah "had pity on the gourd," "should not God have pity on Nineveh, that great city wherein are more than six-score thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?"

It has been said that there is no finer clause in all literature than the last verse.

Allegory.—Jonah is taken to typify Israel, which had

become hardened and exclusive in its attitude to other nations. The fish probably represents the Babylonian Captivity (Jer. li. 34-44). Cruel treatment at the hands of the heathen had filled the Jews with hatred, and they longed for Yahweh's judgment to break in upon them. And Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, is representative of heathendom at its worst.

Our Lord must have often had the story told Him by His mother. He would have loved it more and more as He grew older, because it was such a true picture of His Father's compassion for all His children.

Christ draws two illustrations from Jonah in His teaching—Matthew xii. 39-41 and Luke xi. 29-30, but Matthew xii. 40 is not thought by scholars to form part of the original Gospel, but possibly was put in by a scribe who was copying it.

N.B.—Jonah, the hero round whom the author weaves his book, lived about 750 B.C., but scholars tell us that the book was written about 300 B.C.

(a) We are told that Nineveh was a great city. The Hebrew word for "was" implies the past, and we know that the city fell in the year 606 B.C., so it must have been written after that.

(b) The words and constructions used were common in the writings about the year 300 B.C. There are many words used in Elizabeth's time which we no longer use, and others have changed their meaning. See for example the Book of Common Prayer and Shakespeare.

(c) "Nor does this book claim to be real history—on the contrary, it offers to us all the marks of a parable or allegory."*

To us the idea of a whale swallowing a man seems extraordinary, but other Jewish prophets wrote about sea monsters swallowing up nations. Jeremiah, when he wants to speak of Israel being overwhelmed by Babylon, talks of it as being devoured by a sea monster (Jer. li. 34).

* Findlay, "Jesus as they saw Him," Luke, p. 125; Gore, "Bampton Lectures"; Houghton, "Telling Bible Stories"; G. A. Smith, "Book of the Twelve Prophets," p. 408.

We find both draw the story from fairy-tales by their remote ancestors. One of these myths thought that the sun was swallowed up by a dragon every night and thrown up again in the morning—"Disgorged its prey."

To many the missionary purpose of the story is still unknown, and they take it either as a miracle or a proof that the Bible is not true.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

Books to Read.

Bevan, "Jerusalem under the High Priests."

Nairne, "The Faith of the Old Testament."

Historical Situation.

The reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (see p. 107). Picture—

(1) The people being slaughtered rather than deny their religion.

(2) The violation of the Temple; its worship destroyed. God does not intervene. Let the children read Psalm lxxix.

(3) The perplexity and despair of the Jews. To them death was darkness, a pit; and long life the reward of goodness* (see fifth commandment). The Christian martyrs, Stephen and Polycarp, knew that martyrdom was only a transitory moment of pain, and that death was not the end, but the gate to a fuller life. The Jews were pioneers on the road to martyrdom.

(4) *The Solution*.—Then in their agony someone grasped the truth: this life was only a beginning; there was another. He wrote down his thought: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

"It was a great moment in the history of religion when these words obtained a place in the consciousness of Israel."† Where do we find them? (Dan. xii. 23). Daniel is what we call an apocalypse (see p. 157).

* Bevan (adapted), p. 83.

† *Ibid.*

The belief in immortality grew stronger and more definite as the years passed on. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him."

"The sense of Divine fellowship is in itself a promise of personal immortality. God cannot permit those who painfully have sought and found Him to vanish utterly from His universe. All that is good, true, or beautiful must be immortal with God; so far as we gain or possess such qualities, we, too, must be likewise immortal."*

The Stories of Daniel.

These stories are like that of Jonah (see p. 152). For whom was the message of Daniel meant? Men, women, and boys to whom the choice might come any day of either undergoing the most horrible tortures or worshipping the Greek gods. Picture them reading these stories, and catching the conviction of the writer that "Our God can deliver us, but if not we will not fall down and worship the image"; "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Dan. iv. 25). Let the class read or tell them one of these stories.

The Story of the Burning Fiery Furnace.

"Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? . . . Lo . . . I see four men loose . . . and they have no hurt" (Dan. iii. 24-25).

The underlying truths of these stories have been proved over and over again by the servants of God in all generations—e.g., Sir Ernest Shackleton says in the story of his 1914-1917 expedition: "When I look back on those days I know that during the long and racking march over the unnamed mountains and glaciers of South Georgia it seemed to me often that we were four, not three. I said nothing to my companions on this point, but afterwards Worsley said to me: 'Boss, I had a curious feeling that there was another person with us.' Crean confessed to the same idea. One feels the dearth of human words, the roughness of mortal speech, in trying to describe

* Barnes, p. 19.

things intangible, but a record of our own journey would be incomplete without a reference to a subject that was near our own hearts" ("South," p. 209).

What is an Apocalypse?

"The Book of Daniel stands in a class by itself in the Old Testament. Its form is very different from that of the Books of Jeremiah or Isaiah. Its symbolism, quaint imagery, and atmosphere of mystery are unique. It is, in fact, the first representative of a new type of literature of which many examples appeared in the succeeding centuries—the apocalyptic. (The word itself simply means 'revelation.')

"The transition from prophecy to apocalyptic was gradual. In the visions of Ezekiel, and in chapters xxiv. to xxvii. of Isaiah, are the beginnings of the tendency; but Daniel is the first complete apocalypse. Between its appearance and 100 A.D. a considerable literature of this type was written, for the most part in Galilee, embodying many developments in religious and ethical doctrine which prepared the way in no small measure for the coming of Christianity, and in the atmosphere of which the writers of the New Testament were nurtured. . . . To reconstruct the world of ideas and aspirations in which the Jew lived at the beginning of the Christian era, it is to this apocalyptic literature that one must turn. It is the link between the prophetic ideals of Old Testament religion and the new life and thought of Christianity. . . .

"Apocalyptic arose when Israel had for centuries been subject to foreign domination. One of the problems with which it was confronted was the place of these powers in the Divine purpose. And so the apocalypticist turned back to the past to trace the hand of Jehovah, manifestly directing the course of history, and then forward to the day when He would come in judgment to give Israel the victory over all her foes. This was commonly done by the author assuming the standpoint of someone in a bygone age, and setting forth under the guise of prediction what was really history, capping the story by real prediction

(*e.g.*, Dan. xi.). The visionary form is, of course, a literary device. . . .”*

“Christ Himself took His language from this book when He wished to speak on those things which will least bear to be described in precise terms, as, for example, His own bond of relationship with the whole of mankind.”

THE PSALMS.

“The Psalms are poetry, and poetry is a supreme form of art. Art has been defined in various terms, but the best description is his who said that the aim of art is joy. The Psalter is always serious and sometimes sad; yet it is sad only to transform sadness into joy, and its main characteristic is gladness.”† In the Psalms nature is the vision and language of God. The nature Psalms especially appeal to children.

The scenery of the Psalter is mainly Canaan—hills, open country, or desert, but especially hills or mountains.

1. *By Whom Written.*

A hymn-book has many authors—*e.g.*, modern hymns:

“God moves in a mysterious way” (Cowper).

“Awake, my Soul” (Bishop Ken).

“Glory to Thee” (Bishop Ken).

“Jesu, Lover of my Soul” (C. Wesley).

In this old hymn-book the names of the authors are not given.

(a) Some were written by men who were happy and wanted to praise God—*e.g.*, Ps. ciii. Children may suggest others.

(b) Some by men who were in great difficulties, and felt that God was the only One who could help them (Ps. xlv.).

(c) Others by men who had done wrong, and who were miserable till God forgave them (Ps. xxxii.).

“While the Prophets walked the streets of Jerusalem and visited the High Place of Bethel, and their names were

* Hugh Martin, “The Meaning of the Old Testament,” p. 148.

† “Faith of the Old Testament,” p. 199.

coupled with those of the Kings, the Psalmists communed with their own hearts in their chambers, and were still, living unnoticed by the annalists of Israel and Judah.”*

2. *When Written.*

(a) This collection of collections grew for some 800 years. Think of an English hymn-book begun at the Norman Conquest and continued to the present day. David may have written one or two (Ps. xv., xviii. xxiv.; cf. 2 Sam. i. 19-27).

(b) Others seem to have been composed during the Exile (Ps. cxxxvii.).

(c) Others when the Temple was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes (Ps. lxxix.). Let the children read Ps. xcvi., and make suggestions as to its date.

“A Psalm may be the growth of more than one mind, of more than one age, and may have more than a single reference. A Psalm which originally referred to domestic oppression (xiv.) is adapted, it seems, by a later age to refer to the repulse of foreign foes (liii.). Thus the historical background may not be single but double.”†

Note on the Imprecatory Psalms.

Amongst all these beautiful prayers we find some verses in which the writers wish ill to their enemies and ask God to take vengeance upon them (e.g., Ps. cxxxvii.).

Picture—

(a) The Hebrews carried away from their own country, and obliged to live in a foreign land far away.

(b) Their captors’ request—“Sing us one of the songs of Zion” (in other words, of the Homeland).

(c) Their passionate love for their country and their Temple—a good side of their character. “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?”

(d) The brooding over past wrongs and hatred of their enemies—a bad side of their character. They think—

(i.) Of the Edomites, descendants of Abraham’s other

* Barnes, “Cambridge Biblical Essays,” p. 140. † *Ibid.*

son Ishmael, and curse them, for they perhaps were at the root of their trouble.

- (ii.) Of the Babylonians, in whose power they were, and whose babes they would gladly take and dash on the rocks.

This was before Christ came. It was Christ who taught, "Love your enemies"; who prayed when the Roman soldiers were nailing Him to the Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"; who gives to His servants the power to return good for evil.

3. *By Whom Used.*

(a) By the Jews.

- (1) Some were sung when they were having their happy journeys to the feasts at Jerusalem. The Pilgrim Psalms (cxx.-cxxviii.).
- (2) Some on the evening of the Passover (Ps. cxiv.-cxviii.).
- (3) Some in the services of the second Temple.

(b) By Christians. No book has been such a comfort to thousands of men and women in all the varied scenes of life—*e.g.*, Hooper, Ridley, Livingstone, Havelock.*

(c) By Christ Himself. As a boy He must have learnt numbers of these Psalms, and His last recorded words on the Cross are: "Into Thy Hands I commend my Spirit" (Ps. xxxi. 5; see also Luke xxiv. 44).

N.B.—"There is one book of sacred poetry which is unique in its kind; which has nothing like it or second to it. Whenever the Book of Psalms began to be put together, and whenever it was completed, from that time in the history of the world the religious affections and the religious emotions, the object of which was the One Living God of all, found their final, their deepest, their unsurpassed expression. What is the idea of religion which appears on the face of every single Psalm? It is the idea of the unfailing tenderness of God; the certainty that in the vastness and the catastrophes of the world the soul in its

* Protheroe, "Psalms in Human Life."

own singleness has a refuge ; is held by the hand, is guided by the eye, of One who cares for the weakest, as much as He is greater than the greatest of His creatures."*

THE GROWTH OF THE GOSPELS.

Book to Read.—Sanday and Emmett, "The New Testament Background."

We are sometimes asked what mention of Jesus Christ there is outside the Gospels. There is one reference very clear and distinct. The Roman historian Tacitus, in speaking of the great fire at Rome 64 A.D., says the suspicion of having caused it was thrown by Nero on the unpopular sect of Christians, and he adds that Christ, the Founder of the sect, had been put to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius.

Oral Tradition.—We might give a picture to the children of what probably happened. Let them note Acts i. 8. The Apostles and the other brethren do not seem to have begun at once to obey this command ; they remained peacefully at Jerusalem for five years or longer, and their numbers grew with astonishing rapidity. Then the storm broke, and the murder of Stephen was followed by a general persecution. The Christians were forced to flee from Jerusalem, and in a few days only the Apostles were left (viii. 2-3).

viii. 4 : They went everywhere to preach the word.

Picture the Christians hurrying down the roads from Jerusalem, preaching the good news wherever they found a refuge. What would their message be? "The Messiah is Jesus." A different Messiah from what the people had expected. They would tell how He suffered and rose again, and would explain what the old prophets had said, which was fulfilled in Him. They would point out also how different His teaching was from that of the Pharisees and Rabbis ; they repeated His own words, and they came to feel that these words were so precious that they must be written down.

* Church, "Gifts of Civilization," p. 287.

The Earliest Writing.—So someone inscribed on a strip of papyrus "remembered sayings of the Master," at what date is unknown; it was early, perhaps ten or twelve years after the Crucifixion, 40 or 50 A.D. It has been suggested that something may even have been put down in the lifetime of the Lord. "There is evidence that shorthand was practised at this time," and of all the Apostles Matthew was the most likely to have known it.

This early document we call Q (German, "Quelle" = source).

Where is Q?—No one knows where the Q document is, probably not in existence, as papyrus would quickly be destroyed by any climate outside Egypt, mouldering away or drying up.

We have a record of its contents. Can the class think where? When you find, in two stories by different people, parts which are exactly alike, you know the writers must have copied from the same account. In Matthew and Luke there are two hundred verses alike which are not in Mark. These, it is supposed, are from Q.

The Synoptic Gospels.—N.B.—Of the four Gospels, the first three are so like each other they are called Synoptic, from Greek "Syn" = together, "opsis" = view. The question of how they came to be so much alike is called "the Synoptic Problem."

S. LUKE'S GOSPEL.

A.—*Aim.*

That the children may get a new and living interest in the Gospel which has been described as "the most beautiful book in the world."

B.—*Author.*

Who is the Writer of the Book?—The old familiar words take on a new meaning when we know something about the writer, and the sources from which he found his stories. (Let the teacher select from the following what is most interesting to his class, letting them discover the

facts for themselves whenever possible ; fill in something from the imagination.)

Let the children discover—

- (a) That the same author wrote Luke and the Acts.
- (b) That the writer was not with Christ during His earthly life (also by comparing Acts i. 1, 2 with Luke i. 1-4).
- (c) That he was S. Paul's companion (see "we" sections in Acts—xvi. 10, xx. 6).
- (d) That he was interested in medical matters.

Do you know anyone who fulfils these conditions (*b, c, d*) ? Look at Col. iv., Philemon, 2 Tim. iv., and we find that S. Luke (who was not one of the Twelve) was S. Paul's companion and his doctor. And tradition says it was S. Luke who wrote both the Gospel and Acts.

C.—S. Luke's Life, and how he got his Knowledge about Jesus Christ.

Two theories about his early life : (*a*) Ramsay thinks that S. Luke came from Philippi, and that he was probably one of the many Greeks of all ages who have sought their fortunes away from home ; that he was resident in Troas and well known there ; that he was called in to visit S. Paul and found a remarkable patient ; from his lips heard for the first time the good news, and was converted. They may have had long talks together, and Luke, finding that S. Paul had no clear lead where to preach next, urged him to come westward to Philippi in Macedonia.

In the night S. Paul had a vision and heard the man from Macedonia calling him, and they set off—"assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them."

(*b*) Another theory is that Luke had been a fellow-student of S. Paul at Tarsus, which stood high in reputation as a medical school. It is further possible that they had worked together at Antioch, or that Paul, when stricken down by illness in Galatia, had sent for "the beloved physician," and that, as he begins missionary

work at once, he was not a new convert. Either theory lends itself to a graphic picture for the children.

After S. Luke and S. Paul had met at Troas, they went together to Philippi.

Whether S. Luke was a native of Philippi or not he apparently stays there six years. Picture him practising as a doctor, yet finding time to look after the Christians and preach the good news in the country round. 2 Cor. viii. 18 may refer to him. Perhaps, as he goes round visiting his patients, he wishes he could tell them more of the earthly life of the Lord that he too had learned to love so well, and he thinks that it ought to be written down. S. Paul had seldom told them the stories of the days in Palestine, for to him Jesus was so real and close now.

It may be at that time that the idea of writing a book came to S. Luke, and that he took notes of what anyone could tell him, and thought: "One day I will go to Palestine and try to learn particulars from those who saw Him, before they pass away."

S. Luke's Second Meeting with Paul on Third Missionary Journey.

In Acts xx. the "we" sections recommence, for S. Paul has come to Philippi again and keeps the Passover with the Church there; he is on his way to Jerusalem with money which had been given by the Gentile Churches for the poor Jewish Christians; delegates from the different Churches are to present it. Luke is asked to be one of them. Probably he is glad, for he feels that S. Paul needs a doctor with him, and now is his chance, for he will surely meet some who knew the Lord.

He travels with Paul from Philippi.

To Cæsarea.—S. Luke loves the sea. He keeps a diary, "a travel document." We know the way they went. They finally land at Cæsarea (see map). It was the virtual capital of Palestine, almost like a little bit of Rome. Herod had spent twelve years in building it. He

had erected sumptuous palaces, theatre and amphitheatre, and constructed an enormous breakwater. It was the headquarters of the Roman troops. The Procurator had his seat there. On the great white temple, which shone out over the harbour to the far seas, stood two statues of Augustus and Rome.

In the House of Philip.—Are there any Christians here? Yes: S. Paul has a friend who takes in the travellers. Can we find out who Philip was?

Let the children discover from S. Luke's second book that Philip had been driven out of Jerusalem by the persecution started by S. Paul twenty years before. "We wonder whether Philip realized that the physician who listened so eagerly to all that he could tell him about the early days of the Church was going to perpetuate the record for all time."

To Jerusalem.—The party have to hasten on to Jerusalem, but in a fortnight are back again, S. Paul a prisoner.

Back to Cæsarea.—It is most probable that Luke makes his headquarters with Philip for the next two years. He must have been a delightful guest, and his host and daughter would do their utmost to get him information.

Possible Sources for S. Luke.—Luke would probably find that Philip had a little written document of the "remembered sayings of the Master" (Q; see p. 162), which he copies carefully. Philip could tell him also about the Samaritans, and we find an interest in them both in the Gospels and in the Acts.

There is Manaen, Herod's foster-brother, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward (Luke viii. 3). From her he may learn many particulars not hitherto recorded. We think from that source may have come the great block of material, called "The Travel Document," the last journey to Jerusalem, which begins in S. Luke ix. 51-xvii. 11, and much knowledge of the Herods generally.

A girls' class would be interested to discover that it is only from S. Luke we know that women accompanied the Twelve, and "ministered to the Lord of their substance." They may look through S. Luke and find other instances

of his interest in women—*e.g.*, the stories of Mary and Martha; the women who followed bewailing Him on the way of the Cross; the widow of Nain; the woman with a spirit of infirmity.

At Cæsarea Luke is but sixty miles from Jerusalem (two days' ride). Mary the Mother of Jesus may have been still alive. It is very possible that he went to see her. We may picture him at her little home with S. John, and there she tells him of the days so long ago when she took her first-born Child to be presented in the Temple, of her astonishment when an old man with a beautiful face took the Child up in his arms and said he had been waiting for years to see Him, Anna also. How she and Joseph went back to Nazareth and lived quietly there, and the Child grew strong; of the second time He went up with them to the Temple, and how they started home again, and never knew He was left behind. S. Luke might say: "Is there nothing else you can tell me of His childhood?" "No; except that He was always obedient, and grew taller and wiser, and every day we loved Him more." And S. Luke listens and puts it down in his own language: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Then as they talked and S. Luke seemed no more a stranger, Mary told him of the wonderful vision which came to her, the great good news of the little Son who was coming, and of the hurried journey into the hill-country of Judæa to see Elizabeth, and of Bethlehem and the shepherds.

Luke must have gone to others at Jerusalem. Possibly Cleopas still lived at Emmaus, and S. Luke is directed to him, and from him learns the beautiful story which we find in chapter xxiv. Does another give him the story of the penitent thief? And how is it he alone tells "the Lord turned and looked on Peter"? We cannot tell.

To Rome.—S. Luke's work is suddenly brought to a close by S. Paul's trial, so long deferred, and his appeal to Cæsar. S. Luke is allowed to accompany him to Rome; it is probable that he obtained a free passage as a physician. The next two years are spent at Rome.

D.—Some Characteristics of S. Luke shown in his Books.

S. Luke has those qualities which make a doctor beloved in every age :

Judgment, for with what wonderful skill he chooses and weaves his materials.

Sympathy, especially with the poor and the outcast, and those that men despised.

The Spirit of Service.—He alone records the words of the Master : " I am among you as He that serveth."

S. Luke must have loved to record the words of Isaiah which our Lord read in the synagogue at Nazareth, as a description of what He had come to do : " He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

Hope.—" S. Luke's Good Shepherd seeks the lost sheep until he finds it ;" the lost piece of silver, the Prodigal Son, are found in the end.

Joy.—It has been said that S. Luke is pre-eminently the Gospel for the young, and contains more purely happy scenes than any of the others. S. Paul reminds his friends in Rome that the connection between joy and hope is very close (Rom. xv.). No Gospel gives such a sense of joy as S. Luke. It begins with the tidings of great joy, and ends, " They returned to Jerusalem with great joy," and the children will find that joy and praise come in again and again. Note also the three hymns.

Though S. Luke was probably anxious to get his manuscript on one roll—which was the traditional length of an ancient book (*cf.* lengths of Matthew, Luke, and the Acts)—it is from him that we know most of our Lord's prayers.

Prayer.—Let the children compare the accounts of Matthew and Mark, of the Baptism and the Transfiguration, and find S. Luke's account. They will also discover instances in ix. 18, xi. 1—a prayer for S. Peter and for those that nailed Him to the cross (xxii. 32, xxiii. 34), and

the last prayer, which the children might like to learn and use at night before going to sleep; they will also find three stories on prayer.

E.—When the Books may have been Written.

Can the children discover anything by which they can date them? The present generation will for many years date the events of their lives "as before and after the Great War," so in the first century there was a great and awful catastrophe.

In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, and the Temple priesthood and sacrifices disappeared; the national life was crushed. Many think this must have happened when S. Luke recorded the Lord's words in chapter xxi. "There is an interesting and very possible theory that there were two periods of literary activity in S. Luke's life: the first at Cæsarea, when while in attendance on S. Paul he wrote 'The Travel Document'; the second seventy years later, when after the Apostle's death he embodied this early sketch into a maturer history—'the classic of missionary literature,' and this is also true of the Gospel. He wrote the shorter Gospel when in the company of S. Paul, and embodied it in a larger history at a later date, inserting into it S. Mark."*

S. Luke knew that Jesus had come to be the Saviour of the world accepted by the Gentiles, but rejected by His own people. This is the main theme of the Acts: witness the preface, the whole development of the history, as later in a special emphasis on each stage of the opening of the Gospel to a wider field, and the last words of S. Paul: "We go to the Gentiles: they will hear."

"He stood at what seemed to him perhaps the midday of the Christian faith. It was in reality the first hour of a morning far longer than he dreamed of, a day of which the full noontide is still unutterably distant."†

* Streeter, the *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1921.

† See Carpenter, p. 60.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. MATTHEW.

Books to Read.

"The College S. Matthew."

Plummer, "S. Matthew."

"In no case is the title of a book in the N.T. part of the original document. It was in all cases added by a copyist, perhaps not the first copyist."*

How has the Gospel got the Name of S. Matthew?

1. Papias, Bishop of Neapolis, says: "Matthew in the Hebrew (Aramaic) language compiled the logia (or composed the oracles), and every man interpreted as he could." "This means that it was believed that Matthew had something to do with a collection of sayings of the Lord."

2. When the unknown constructor of the first Gospel took the second Gospel, S. Mark, and fitted into it the contents of this collection of utterances, together with other material of his own gathering, he produced a work which was at once welcomed by the first Christians as much more complete than S. Mark, and different from S. Luke, if that were in existence. What was it to be called? S. Mark's name was taken; why not call it by the supposed author of the other main source?

How the Book grew.

1. We may picture now how the book was made up. The primitive Church "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayer." "At first the coming of the Lord was looked for daily,"† "but delay led on to settled work and prayer."

2. "Institutions were adopted—elders, churches, deacons, ordered worship, and when they met together the Hebrew oracles of S. Matthew were read in the Church service. Persecution forced the Church to become missionary, and new communities were founded. In their

* Plummer, p. vii.

† "Faith of the New Testament," Nairne.

worship, too, the oracles were read and translated now as each best could."*

3. Sometime later they combined these with the narrative of the Saviour's words and deeds, death, and Resurrection, and S. Matthew is built up. "No reference to the Gospel in Christian literature would prove it to have been finally settled in shape and content till the beginning of the second century."†

"It was the presence of these 'oracles' that made it such a favourite, and gained for it such a wide circulation. It quite eclipsed Mark, and in almost all collections of the Gospel it took the first place. For many early Christians it was probably the only Gospel they knew, and it sufficed, for it told them so much of what our Lord said. Matthew was the Gospel of the teaching of Christ, and teaching was above all what that generation believed in. In it they felt they got nearer to Him of whom those sent to arrest Him said, 'Never man so spake.'‡

The Expectation of the Kingdom.

We can hardly recapture now the intense feeling that filled every Jewish boy's heart: "Some day God will come down, and give us a wonderful King; we shall be free and rule the world." To the Greeks and Romans the Golden Age was in the past—to the Jews it was in the future. The opening of this new age was called the coming of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven. It was to be ushered in by the appearance of a great Deliverer who would save Israel and rule over God's people in righteousness. Prophets and priests and poets had all taught about this "Messiah" who should come from God, and begin what they called "the Kingdom."

"In the time of Jesus the unsympathetic government of Rome constantly irritated and stung this proud and ancient people; while the belief that the promised Heavenly Kingdom could not be long delayed was everywhere becoming more vivid and intense. But along with the growing conviction of the near approach of a great crisis, there came

* Nairne (adapted), p. 45.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

a pitiable degradation of its lofty hope. The moral and religious elements were more and more lost sight of, while the national and political elements seized the foreground. So far had the change gone that the common conception of the Messiah and the coming Kingdom amongst the people was that an invincible military leader, armed with miraculous power, would be sent by Yahweh, to overwhelm the tyranny of Rome, and to make Israel the greatest imperial power on earth. He would be a mighty King, like their ancient hero David, only far greater, since he would be able to work miracles. Hence the commonest name in those days for the Messiah was 'The Son of David.' He was also called 'The King of Israel,' or 'The King of the Jews,' and sometimes the 'Son of God.' '*

It was for Jews that the Gospel was written. The compiler knew that the Messiah had come—come in a far different and more wonderful way than they had ever dreamed of, so we shall not be surprised to find that "if in S. Luke He is the Master revealing more and more His Divine wisdom, holiness, sympathy, and power, in S. Matthew He is the King so long expected, the anointed King under whom we now live."† S. Matthew is careful to point out also that the old prophecies were fulfilled in Him; His Kingdom was far other than their dreams.

Let the class turn to chapter i. They will not be astonished to find a genealogy that shows Jesus of Nazareth was descended from David.

The Wise Men.

In chapter ii. they will find a story which we all love, which shows—and there is abundant evidence to confirm it—that the expectation of a Deliverer or universal King, before the birth of Christ, was very widespread.

"The only element in the story which resembles legend is the statement 'the star went before them,' which may be a poetical way of telling that what they had seen in the sky led the Magi to set off to find the new-born King. If

* See "College S. Matthew," p. 9.

† Nairne, "Faith of the New Testament."

we like to omit the dream and substitute for it a distrust of Herod, we shall have an account which reads like sober history."*

The children should know something of Herod. It is not surprising that the massacre of a few children at Bethlehem is not narrated amongst the appalling list of his crimes recorded elsewhere. He murdered his own favourite wife and three of his sons because he was jealous of them. It is most likely that the Magi would tell Joseph of Herod's interest in the new-born King; that they would all feel that it boded no good; that Joseph would go to sleep feeling anxious, and that in the night he would suddenly awake and feel they both must leave Bethlehem at once. We can picture him arousing Mary, and hastily preparing for the sudden flight, for daylight must find them far on the road to safety. Their natural refuge would be Egypt. (See p. 33.)

We have no idea how long the Holy Family stayed in Egypt. When the news of Herod's death reached Joseph he would feel God meant him to return. When he finds that Archelaus, the worst of Herod's sons, is reigning in Judæa, he goes back to Galilee and settles in his old village. S. Matthew connects with the O.T. whenever he can. Let the children find Hosea xi. 1, and see that the quotation is not a prophecy, but a sort of analogy.

The Forerunner.

Chapter iii. 1-13 gives an account of the Forerunner with his startling message, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Let the children think out what idea of the Messiah John would have. What would Zacharias and Elizabeth have taught him? They belonged to a section of the people who have been called "the quiet in the land." These people looked back on the history of their nation, and felt it was one long story of unfaithfulness to God and of falling into sin. They remembered the prophecy of Jeremiah xxxi. : "A new heart will I give you." One day, surely, God's people would have a new power given to them to serve Him.

* Plummer, p. 12.

Thus mixed up with the idea of a military conqueror there was another expectation that the Messiah would save them not only from their enemies, but from their sins: "they would walk in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life." We can picture John, his father and mother dead, going away from the hill country into the wilderness hard-by to be alone, the words which his father had spoken in his mind: "And thou, child, shall be called the prophet of the Highest" (Luke i. 76). We are not told that he had been brought up to any trade, and he needed no money, for his food was what the desert produced—locusts, probably wild beans, and honey. At last, perhaps after many years, the call comes, and he knows the Messiah is at hand, and the people are not ready; he must go and prepare the way as the prophet had said. So he stands by the great high-road up which the pilgrims journey to Jerusalem and cries "Repent!" and there is a stir in the land.

The Baptism.

It is thought that at the Baptism the conviction came to our Lord that He Himself was the deliverer, the King who was to bring in the Kingdom, and that this was in virtue of a unique relationship to God, which could only be expressed in the words "My Father," answering to the voice from above: "Thou art My son, My Beloved."

"That Christ's work and mission rested on this unique relationship to God and His Father was the deep inner secret which gave unity and meaning to His life, but for the present it was the Kingdom He had to proclaim."

"Like John, He had to summon men to the Kingdom, now no longer in the vague future, but actually at hand." Yet before He could proclaim the Kingdom He had to think out the best way.

The Temptation.

Under the impulse of the Spirit, He climbed up from the low valley of the Jordan to the desolate heights of the wilderness of Judæa to be alone and to think out how He

was to bring in the Kingdom. Three only of the struggles of His mind are shown to us.

1. The first is beyond the children's ken; it seems to be the direct outcome of His experience at His Baptism. "If thou be the Son of God," etc. There would be a reaction after the strain and exaltation—a questioning of the reality and value of this spiritual experience.

It is the agelong struggle of the prophet's soul at the outset of His mission; *cf.* Moses: "They will say the Lord has not appeared unto me; show me a sign that Thou talkest with me."*

Is that sense He had just had of the nearness of Heaven, the approval of the Father sealing His decision, enough for Him to go out and face the people with? He had felt endued with power from on high; shall He prove it, and see if this power will enable Him to supply His own needs?

It is a temptation which may come to any of Christ's followers when they have had any mystical experience, at any time in their lives when they have prayed and realized that they were not alone; when they have done some difficult thing, forgiven an injury, or made a sacrifice at some cost; and then there comes the sense of right-doing, and that Someone approves, and they hear, "Thou art My beloved son." It must come to many missionaries when they have heard the call and answered it, and gone out to far-off lands. Then the reaction: "Was it real? Were my prayers for guidance heard, or have I imagined it all? Is my work really worth while? Has God sent me?"

"Man shall not live by bread alone." Christ said that spiritual experience—the soul's experience of God—was the ultimate reality in human life; we cannot prove it by any purely physical manifestation.†

If He was the Son of God, and was set apart for a special work, the Father would look after the life of the body.

2. There was an old apocalyptic belief in the nation that the Messiah would appear suddenly in the heavens. If Christ threw Himself down from the Temple the people

* Hooke, "Christ and the Kingdom of God," p. 23 (adapted).

† Hooke (adapted).

would believe at once that He was the promised King, and the Kingdom would soon be brought in.

Let the children discuss why this way was rejected, and lead them to see that, as with the Master, so with the disciples, it is never by the way of force over either mind or body, but always by the way of love, that the Kingdom is to be spread. The discussion may lead into many by-paths—*e.g.*: Is it better in a school or a community to be compelled to do right, or to do it because it is right?

3. The end can never justify unworthy means, or, in common parlance, we must never do evil that good may come. Let the class discuss and illustrate.

As there was no one with Jesus in the wilderness, He must have told it to the disciples sometime when He saw they needed it. It was an intimate experience which could only be told to friends who would understand. Sometime, perhaps after James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans, and they were alone under the stars, He may have told them that to Him, too, had the temptation come to use the way of force, and to compel men to believe.

iv. 12-22: Here S. Mark is used again. The children should realize that before this there was apparently a ministry in Judæa (see John i.).

The Preaching.

Now Christ begins to carry out His call to establish the Kingdom. "The first way that presented itself was that of preaching. This was the old prophetic method. He had to call men into the Kingdom," and when John was delivered up, He went to Galilee proclaiming the "good news," but saying nothing of Himself as King.

23-25: Here S. Matthew goes back to Q.

Method.

S. Matthew has been likened to an architect; therefore the children will find he likes to arrange the teaching in blocks; the first of these is commonly called—

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Who will be in the Kingdom (Matt. v. 1-12).

Perhaps the best way of enlisting the children's interest is to leave the idea of the Kingdom and see how the people in it can be called happy. It might be well to encourage the children to express their own ideas of what constitutes happiness. They will not at first see that it is what a man is, not what he has, which matters. This cuts clean across the world's idea of happiness.

The first two Beatitudes are beyond a child's experience; let the children learn them, and do not overstress the explanation.

"The poor in spirit." Not the poor-spirited; some explain it as "detached." Possibly the story of S. Francis would illustrate this: "As having nothing, yet possessing all things."

"They that mourn." It is thought that Christ meant those who mourn for Israel.

Mourning for the sorrows of others means, for children, a call for active help—*e.g.*, the giving up of time and pleasure to amuse a sick playmate, or an old person; *cf.* "all seek their own" with S. Paul's description of Timothy and Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 19-30). Whether children grow up with sympathies developed or blind to the opportunities of service which lie around them is very much a matter of early training, but we have no doubt which way lies happiness.

"The meek." Jesus does not say, "Blessed are the weak, or those held under or despised"; He Himself is meek (Matt. xi. 29).

Later the prophet Zechariah is quoted as bidding the daughters of Zion "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek." "The term stands opposed to pride, not to majesty or strength—indeed, no moral quality so taxes our courage or implies a more utter conquest of weakness by will." Let the children note what it is *not*. It is not what is called easy-going, it is not being easily led, it is not indifference to wrongdoing. It means self-conquest, self-

restraint. Anger is no proof of strength. "It lies, not in the power of letting oneself go, but in the power of holding oneself in."

"The meek—the gentle in the old and best sense, as in the poet Dekker's words :

' The best of men
That e'er wore earth about Him was a sufferer,
A soft, "meek," patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
The first true gentleman that ever breathed.'

"We find gentleness exhibited in perfection by our Lord during the stormy scenes of the Passion (see John xviii. 23)—the gentleness that bears with provocation and controls irritation and refuses to resent personal injury."

N.B.—We feel above all, in dealing with children, the strength of meekness. "There is a sovereignty which belongs to an iron will : we all know it, and we all hate it. There is another sovereignty which belongs to mere violent temper : we hate that still more. Sooner or later we all come to believe the French writer's aphorism, *La douceur est une force*."

"They that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Those who long for that Kingdom because it brings the power to conquer sin will attain their desire. It might be connected with the children's experience by an illustration—e.g., those who are trying hard to conquer a fault will in the end gain the victory.

"The merciful." The word "merciful" may be taken to include something of the idea of compassion, and something of the readiness to forgive. "There are two especial forms : the mercy that relieves suffering, and the mercy that forgives wrongdoing."* Cf. "The quality of mercy is not strained."

Let the children be reminded that they should be merciful to all animals. (See Year I.)

N.B.—"It has been said that we often demand self-expression from children on moral questions, in some cases where self-expression is impossible. The things that our experience makes so vivid and real to us are not yet so to

* College, "S. Matthew," p. 104.

them. We ask them for strong expressions of pity and love, for which the power is not in them."

"The pure in heart." Discuss with the children what the word "pure" means, as used in ordinary conversation of a flower, snow, etc., that they may realize how easily purity may be tarnished by careless words or by foolish books, so that like the people of Nazareth of old, they cannot see goodness. "They saw no beauty in Him, that they should desire Him."

"They shall see God." "We become what we see, and we can only see what we are ready to become."*

"The peacemakers." "The power of making peace is so wonderful a thing that we see in it something almost of a creative endowment."

However far this power may be seen to be beyond the average experience of the ordinary person, the children can see how very easy it is to do the opposite, and to help on quarrels by repeating careless remarks and hasty judgments. On a larger scale unfriendliness is stirred up in the same way amongst nations.

"The final responsibility of war may seem to rest with rulers or statesmen, but the motive power is generally due to the spirit of the people. War may seem to break out with the suddenness of a volcanic eruption, but the spirit which causes it is not the growth of a day or a year, neither is the peaceful temper which is the best of all safeguards against it."

"May the nations be poor in spirit—may Thy sons be true mourners for the sins and disorders of the world. Help us to make up quarrels between nations and kingdoms, and rich and poor, and everybody to be peacemakers."

"It takes two to make a quarrel; one can make it up" (Spanish proverb).

"The persecuted." "Peter and John" (Acts v. 41, see also xvi. 25). Telling illustrations can be found in the history of Indian mission work—e.g., Sundar Singh.

The function of this character in the world. "Ye are the salt of the earth" (ver. 13-16).

* Inge.

"Even after the lapse of centuries the intense vividness and abrupt challenge of these words arrest the attention in a striking way. Salt is preservative; the salt we use cannot lose its savour. The Jews used a kind of rock salt from which they extracted the salt by means of water, leaving the clay as mud; it was possible for the salt to lose its savour in Palestine, where the word denoted the earthy mixture, and when it happened there was left simply a mass of mud or clay."

Verse 15: a lamp placed on a stand in the middle of the courtyard would literally "give light to all that were in the house"—i.e., to the rooms opening off the courtyard.

"Bushel." The wooden tub that is kept for measuring the corn for the daily baking.

The disciples must have been perplexed. How could they be like salt to the people around them? How could they be lights to a dark world? Later they knew what the words meant, and we know. Let the children learn verses 13-16.

Love the Law of the Kingdom (ver. 17-26, 33-48).

Those who listened to our Lord must have wondered that in His teaching He had said nothing about the long list of laws which their Rabbis emphasized so strongly; His teaching about the Kingdom was of a different kind from any they had heard before. Did this mean all their ordinary synagogue teaching should be done away with? Instead He came to uplift and complete it by revealing its true meaning. "When that which is perfect is come then that which is in part shall be done away."

"Prophets and Law alike found their fulfilment in Him."

Let the children note the contrast. The old law says, "I must not kill"; the new law, "I must think kindly." The old law, "I must not forswear myself"; the new, "All I say must be true." To "pay people out" is the natural impulse. In the Old Testament times they did not know any better (cf. Imprecatory Psalms, cix., cxxxvii.).

v. 41: The Jews had to help in the public transport system of the Empire as part of their taxation. They were

not to grumble at this, but even do more than was imposed.

Picture, again, the listening crowd of Jews, strong in their pride of race, hating the Roman, the Samaritan, the Gentile. What astounding teaching was this which fell on their ears, and who was he who dared to assume a greater authority than that of Moses? "But *I* say unto you, Love your enemies . . . that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven." It must have seemed quite impossible.

N.B.—It is suggested that the children should not learn what "was said by them of old time"—the ten commandments; they represent an earlier stage in the Divine Law, a lower morality. Let the children learn instead the new commandments :*

"THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND. THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT. AND THE SECOND IS LIKE UNTO IT : THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (xxii. 37-40).†

The Law of Love expressing Itself.

In the old ways of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting.

Let the children read vi. 1. As Christ spoke these words, of whom would the listeners at once think? Of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees (Pharisee=separate) were thought to be the most religious people among the Jews.

(a) Their appearance. They wore the two garments of the Jews, an under tunic coming to the knees, and an outer cloak, like a square shawl with tassels at the four corners. The Pharisees wore larger tassels and big phylacteries (see Matt. xxiii. 5). These were two curious little leather boxes which at prayer-times they fastened, one on their forehead, and the other on the left arm. They contained verses from the Old Testament.

(b) They liked to pray where people could see them.

(c) Eastern people usually anoint their heads with oil as

* See Gore, "Christian Moral Principles."

† See Deut. vi.

a protection against the sun, but when the Pharisees fasted they went about unanointed and unwashed, and with unkempt hair, sometimes putting ashes on their heads, so that people should think they were good.

(d) In a Jewish community men frequently went round with a basket collecting alms for the poor, and on the Sabbath day collections were taken in the synagogue. The Pharisees liked to have the amounts they gave published.

Christ's disciples were to practise the great religious duties of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting to please their Father in Heaven, not in order to be seen of men.

(a) *Almsgiving*.—Their Father had other children who might be in want; if they themselves had more than enough, they must share it. But they were not to do so in order that other people should think how kind they were. Perhaps no one else would know when they gave away something they really needed themselves, but the Father knew, and He cared.

(b) *Prayer*.—Prayer is talking to the Heavenly Father. They could do this best where they would not be interrupted by other people—*e.g.*, Christ (Luke vi. 12); Peter (Acts x. 9). "Saying prayers" not necessarily praying (Matt. vi. 7). Instance praying-wheels as used in Tibet.

(c) *Fasting*.—They were not to let other people know when they fasted.

N.B.—Emphasize the need of self-discipline in our lives. Self-indulgence unfits us for the work of life. Illustrate by a man in training for a race, explorers, etc. The body should be the perfect expression of the spirit.

vi. 19-34: These sayings of our Lord may have been spoken at different times. S. Matthew arranges them in groups.

Let the children choose some of these verses to learn. Christ was brought up in the country; there was no beauty or wonder of nature that would not appeal to Him.

The flowers in Palestine in April are wonderful. There are "white daisies, crimson poppies, yellow marigolds, blue lupins, roses, geraniums, lilies, and thousands

of red anemones that hide the grass with their open flowers."

Verse 18: Eastern wealth often consisted in costly stuffs, which were very liable to be moth-eaten. "Break through" refers to mud walls of Oriental houses.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Let the children discuss this verse. They can see how the present state of the world is due to each nation seeking its own. There is enough for all if each seeks first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

The Uncritical Temper (vii. 1-5).

The Pharisees often "judged" others. Judging is criticizing other people, talking about their faults. Christ always saw good in others.

N.B.—"Always before we judge a man we should feel certain that we clearly see his goodness, though it may be only that possibility of goodness which belongs to him as a creature of God."

The Golden Rule (vii. 12).

The Two Ways (vii. 13-14).

"How very hard it is to be a Christian,
Hard for you and me."

(Browning.)

Christ's listeners were now beginning to realize that the commands of this new teacher were very hard to fulfil. To obey them, He said, was like going in at a very narrow door, and climbing a steep path. It was much easier only to listen, and go on doing as they did before—like going in at a wide door, and walking downhill along a smooth road.

The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders (vii. 24-27).

Read or tell the story. Christ's listeners would understand it much better than we do. The rains in the East (which come all at one season in the year) are very violent.

Let the children think, What was the house which all those people were building? Character. This could only be built up by repeated acts. Christ said that those who *did* what He told them were building up a character on a strong foundation, but those who only listened had a character which they would easily lose altogether when storms of temptation came.

N.B.—The teacher might well spend some time here on discussing the importance of character. The word literally means that which is cut or engraven, so it comes to signify that which is most marked in a man's life, what he is repeatedly doing or saying. "Repeated acts make character, as repeated strokes of the engraver's tool make an outline on the steel or wood." So it is said, "Acts form habits; habits form character; character determines destiny." Hence the importance of what may seem to be little isolated acts of disobedience, inattention, selfishness, etc.

"We may be quite sure that countless little acts of cowardice and self-seeking had hardened the priest and Levite against the claim which was at last suddenly made upon their devotion; we may be quite sure that countless tender services of generous love had prepared the Samaritan to imperil himself without hesitation in the hope of saving a stranger and an alien. When the trial came it showed the men as they had grown to be."

N.B.—The children may be a little young to attack the problem as to how the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount are to be applied to the present day, but if they are interested enough let them try.

"Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (ver. 39). "Christ Himself did not turn the other cheek when they smote Him in the high-priest's house; His words were never dully literal."*

vi. 14, 15: "Can even a national enemy be forgiven, unto seventy times seven? If so, what does forgiveness mean, and how far can its outward manifestations be harmonized with loyalty to other requirements of our Lord Himself,

* Nairne, p. 31.

and how far is generosity required in disputes between capital and labour?"*

Chapters viii. and ix. : Let the children look at these chapters. S. Matthew is now using Mark. The story of the paralytic is a good example of how S. Matthew often alters S. Mark's words. Let the children discover this.

viii. 5-13 : The centurion's servant. This is a beautiful story which does not come from Mark. Can the children find it in Luke? Yes. It is therefore generally supposed to be the only story included in Q which is otherwise composed entirely of sayings of Jesus (p. 161).

Verses 10, 11 : Who will be in the Kingdom. Here is one, and our Lord thinks of many others from India, China, and Japan, as well as from England, France, and Germany, who will be there too.

Verses 16-17 : "Matthew watched Jesus as He stood in the street of Capernaum, in the waning light of the evening, the centre of a great crowd of sick and insane with their anxious relatives, uplifting . . . the burden of suffering from each in turn; and through the disciple's heart there flashed the prophet's words: 'Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases.' He saw it all: Jesus was the prophet of Jahveh prophesied about so long ago."†

The Kingdom.

Let the children hunt through the rest of the Gospel and find out how very often the Kingdom is mentioned, and pause where they are interested. They may ask, What is the Kingdom? We cannot answer straight off—it is like so many things.

N.B.—"In one sense the Kingdom is the rule of God, in the heart or in society. It exists now, but has its full realization in the future. Some have to seek it and gain it. Those who have gained it have to labour to retain it, and this retaining may be regarded as winning it. It is within us, and yet we have to strive to enter it."

* *Ibid.* (adapted).

† Farquhar.

The Church is not the Kingdom; the Church exists to bring in the Kingdom.

Chapter xi. 1-12 makes a graphic picture. (See Year II.)

Let the class discuss whether it was John's faith or patience that failed, or whether it was for the sake of his followers that he sent them to Jesus. "Least in the Kingdom." What does that mean?

Chapter xiii.: The seven parables of the Kingdom. Omit the Sower, which is too familiar and very difficult, and let the children choose which—if any—of the others shall be discussed.

Chapter xix. 13: Some elder classes might like to think out what there is in little children which gives them the key to the Kingdom of Heaven. Perhaps unfailing trust, a sense of dependence, humility, unworldliness; rank or station means nothing to them; fine clothes make no difference to their friendliness. Perhaps it is a sense of wonder.

N.B.—There is a saying of the Lord recorded in the Logia: "Let not him that seeketh cease from his search until he find, and when he hath found, let him wonder. And wondering he shall reach the Kingdom, and when he reacheth the Kingdom he shall have rest."

Chapter xx.: Wrong ideas of the Kingdom.

The King.

Chapter xxi.: Let the class notice that, though there has been so much teaching about the Kingdom, the King has been hardly ever mentioned.

"Now, just before the Passover, when thousands of Jews are making their way to Jerusalem from every quarter, Jesus claims the Messianic Kingdom. How? Not by announcing it. He merely sets about the fulfilling of an old prophecy" (Zech. ix. 9):

"Tell ye the daughters of Zion:
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee . . .
Meek, and riding upon an ass,
And upon a colt the foal of an ass."

The crowd understood what it meant and took up the Messianic cry.

Chapter xxii. : The marriage of the King's Son gives a fresh aspect, that of a banquet—the gladness of the Kingdom. The children can easily think out the meaning. The old prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus Himself, all calling the Jews to the feast in vain. The wedding garment; the character of the citizens of the Kingdom; the man without it will have to go out. Cf. the Beatitudes. This garment is explained by some as love.

Chapter xxv. 31-46: In this story the children will recognize the same thought—"outer darkness," gnashing of teeth. Picture language to try to express what it would be like to find oneself outside love and happiness and home.

Chapter xxvii. 1-44 (parts) : It was not the kind of Messianic Kingdom the Jews expected; therefore they crucified the King. The class will be old enough to understand something of the workings of Pilate's mind, to realize the tragedy of his failure, and how, though he could partially see the right, yet, hampered by evil done in days gone by, he failed to do it.*

Verses 37-39 : The King died to bring in the Kingdom; it was inevitable that He should do so if He were to be true to His ideal of perfect love. It was love to the uttermost : "He saved others, Himself He cannot save."

The Proclamation of the King (xxviii. 18-20).

The children may like to learn it.

N.B.—"Into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Probably the disciples were first baptized into the name of Christ, but this verse is in all the early MSS. These words summed up all that the Church had come to believe about God. "It is an attempt to present in the most intelligible form that our minds can reach the various elements in the being of God which are disclosed by Christian experience."†

We believe that He is the universal Father—the perfect

* Stalker.

† Temple, "Fundamentals of the Faith" (1 s.), p. 19.

love of God is the origin of all existence ; that He is all that Jesus Christ was to the disciples ; that He is the Comforter, the Spirit of Christ within us.*

It was an inadequate way of expressing it, as all human words must be inadequate when they are used to express things Divine.

The King is about to work in a different way now—*i.e.*, through His subjects. "All power hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth." He does not use this power to compel people to come in. It is still by love and not by force that the Kingdom is spread. He asks for our help : "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations." We find the beginnings of this in the Acts of the Apostles. The Church is still engaged in this work, which is the first purpose of her existence.

THE PRAYER OF THE KINGDOM (vi. 9-15).

If the Lord's Prayer is taken here, we might think of it as the Prayer of the Kingdom :

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
as in heaven, so on earth.
Our daily bread
give us this day :
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors :
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.†

Our Father.

We belong to a family ; therefore what we want for ourselves we must also want for the others. We cannot spread the Kingdom effectively unless we work together.

* See Burroughs, "Valley of Decision," p. 55.

† Arrangement in Plummer, p. 96.

Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done.

Each time we hallow God's name, each time we do His will, we bring the Kingdom nearer. The first three petitions hang together.

Where do we want the Kingdom to come?

1. In all the world—*e.g.*, Morrison: his burning desire to go to China; Raymond Lull; Laws of Livingstonia.
2. Here in England.

N.B.—It is commonly said that the people who are connected with the Churches are not the most active in working for better social conditions. Perhaps this comes from our failure definitely to connect such work with religion.

(1) Let the children picture an ideal town where everyone is trying to bring in the Kingdom. Buildings would be beautiful and streets would be clean; posters and cinemas would be pure. Games would be for the joy of playing—no gambling. Music, drama, pictures, all find a place. No drunkenness, no prisons, no workhouses, no smoke. Fewer hospitals, because less illness. No slums. No scamped work. The people all caring for each other as one family—no quarrelling. All doing the work for which they are fitted.

N.B.—"God has a purpose for the passing of the earthly years of each of His children; only in the fulfilling of that purpose in each case is His will done upon earth as it is in heaven. Each child in the Christian State should have all possible opportunities to discover, prepare for, and fulfil his true calling. The effect upon any community of such a genuine belief in vocation would revolutionize education; uplift the standard of service in every department of human labour; there would cease to be higher and lower, secular and sacred callings, save in a limited sense—for the highest and most sacred service for any man must be that he should find himself within the Holy Will of God."*

* A. Small (adapted).

(2) An ideal nation, in which all classes have sympathy with each other.

(3) An ideal world, where all the nations feel they are one family, and each brings its special gift for the perfecting of the city of God (Rev. xxi. 24). "The glory of a nation, like the glory of a citizen or of a class, lies not in supremacy but in service."*

It is God's will that our towns and villages, our country and the world, should be like this. He never imposes His will on us: our wills are free; therefore He can only work through us if we are willing. The children can catch the joy of being able to help in such a big thing as the work for the coming of the Kingdom. It is very difficult, because all the time we have to work for the coming of the Kingdom in our own hearts as well.

Give us this day our daily bread.

What shall we need to help us to do this work? Let the children suggest. Love and wisdom, courage, unselfishness and perseverance. Put in this way, the spiritual "food" will naturally come first in the child's mind, for if all are unselfish and look after each other there will be bread enough for all.

N.B.—"We are perplexed by the limitations of prayer, but Christ, who looks continually on the Father's Face, saw only its possibilities. 'Everyone,' He said, 'that asketh receiveth.' 'Ask, and it shall be given you. . . .' For it is the nature of the Father to give. It belongs to His character. And character in its perfection is the most stable thing in the world. . . . The life of sonship is meant to be full of answered prayers."† It is the child's prerogative to ask, and we shall always be children, even unto the end (Luke xi. i. 13).

Forgive us our trespasses.

We try and we fail; sometimes we nearly give up, but if we tell Him about our falls He will forgive us, and

* Westcott, "The Incarnation and Common Life," p. 83.

† Oldham, "The World and the Gospel."

allow us to help Him again. "In the Law Courts forgiveness means the remission of a penalty. Forgiveness does not mean that between a child and his father . . . or between friends . . . it means the restoration of the old intimacy, in spite of the way in which it has been forfeited by betrayal."*

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

"At first evil becomes known to children by little rebellions of their own. . . . But, sooner or later, the main body of evil will reveal itself to them outside as a great power at work opposing the Kingdom. They will see the harm it does a hundredfold around them," so they will not only have work to do for the Kingdom, but also fighting.

"Then will come a further vision of our Lord Christ, the Leader against the power of evil. . . . With that vision comes the same incentive. He will not fight alone. . . . He needs us to help Him."†

The soldier of Christ must not be over-confident, nor run deliberately into dangerous places unless duty calls him.

For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever.

The issue of the battle is sure.

THE REVELATION OF S. JOHN THE DIVINE.

The Book of the Revelation.

1. Probable date 90-96 A.D., the last years of the Emperor Domitian.

2. A book of visions. Truth embodied in symbolic form. An apocalypse=unveiling. (See p. 157.)

Note.—White is the emblem of purity, joy, and victory; seven the symbol of completeness.

3. "The letter of an exiled prophet to the Christian congregations to whom he had ministered."

The age of persecution was beginning (give the children some idea of what persecution meant during the reigns of Nero and Domitian). S. John writes to comfort the

* Temple, "Universality of Christ," p. 75. † David, T. C. U.

Christians. He tells them of "a triumphant and returning Christ."

"It is impossible to doubt that the roll which contained S. John's great letter to the parent churches in Asia was often in the hands of the daughter churches, and perhaps accompanied the confessors to the prisons where they awaited the martyr's crown."

4. Read to the children Rev. xxi. 10-xxii. 5.

Let them imagine what it must have meant to these persecuted Christians to realize that the arena, with its wild beasts, was only a rough pathway to the glory of the heavenly city (2 Cor. iv. 18).

Note the imagery; the writer's ideal of beauty.

Streets of gold; each gate a single pearl; foundations of precious stones. The gates of the city are never shut—emblem of safety. Not only beautiful and safe, but happy, because everyone will not only do what they like to do, but will like what they ought to do.

And they will be with Someone whom they love.

"His servants shall do Him service, and they shall see His face."

No tears, no sorrow, no pain, no unkindness, no sin; only those who are loving can enter. Therefore here we are to learn to love,

"Our life with all it yields of joy and woe,
Of hope and fear,
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love."
(Browning.)

S. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

Books to Read.

Nairne, "Faith of the New Testament."

Strachan, "The Fourth Gospel" (Introduction).

Grubb, "The Word made Flesh" (S.C.M.).

Large parts of this last and most beautiful Gospel are beyond the range of children, but we must teach them something of its import, so that in later adolescence when they need its message they may wish to study it. It com-

pletes the O.T. revelation, and has been the inspiration and treasure of the saints in all generations.

A.—*Authorship.*

From Irenæus in 175 A.D. onward there has been an unbroken tradition in the Church that John the son of Zebedee wrote from Ephesus, about the end of the first century, the Gospel which bears his name, and that he lived till the time of Trajan (90-110).

Difficulties regarding this Tradition.

1. "About fifty years ago attention was drawn to the fact that in the early second century there was no clear evidence of the presence of John the Apostle in Asia Minor, nor quotations from this Gospel in other writings. There is evidence of someone called John the Elder, but the title "Apostle," which would remove all doubts, is never given to this person."*

2. There are outstanding names in the generation which succeeded the Apostles who might have been expected to mention him, who do not do so—*e.g.*:

- (a) Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, martyred 115. There are epistles of his still extant.
- (b) Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, a disciple of John, martyred 155 (see p. 51).
- (c) Papias, Bishop of Hieropolis, *circa* 125 (the hearer of John and companion of Polycarp), of whose writings a few small fragments were preserved by Eusebius, the Church historian of the fourth century.

On the other hand.

1. The testimony of Irenæus should be trustworthy. He wrote about 175, was made Bishop of Lyons after the martyrdom of Plotinus in the persecution of Marcus Aurelius, and had such success that in a very short time the whole city became Christian. Many of his pupils be-

* Nairne.

came noted missionaries. He was born about 130, and brought up in Asia Minor, and tells us he knew Polycarp.

2. Papias speaks of "disciples," by which he apparently means men who have known the Lord; and presbyters or elders, men who have known the disciples. Then he says that most of the disciples have passed away, but "Aristion and John the Elder still live and still speak." This does not, however, prove that the latter spoke at Ephesus. But it may be that the Presbyter is the unassuming name by which the last surviving Apostle was known at Ephesus.

The trend of criticism has swung slightly back to the older tradition. Many scholars, who have spent years of their lives in the study of this Gospel, feel that no one could have seen so deeply into the mind of the Master as the beloved disciple, and believe that in it we have the sermons of S. John written down by a disciple, who probably added the last chapter.*

B.—*S. John's Life, and Early Church History.*

The class may be interested in hunting through the Synoptic Gospels and the Acts for particulars of S. John. There is a well-attested tradition that the Apostles left Jerusalem twelve years after the Crucifixion, and that S. Peter and S. Paul suffered martyrdom in Nero's persecution, about 64 A.D. The Christians must have felt indeed without a shepherd. Jerusalem was destroyed in 70.

The centre of Christian life and activity seems to have been transferred from Jerusalem to Antioch, and later to *Ephesus*, the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It seems natural that John should have taken charge of the Church there.

C.—*Let us try to picture the life a disciple might lead at Ephesus, and how the Gospel may have been written.*

"From the new world at Ephesus, where the multitudes that none can number of all peoples and languages thronged the streets and quays, he looked back on the Galilæan Gospel and, remembering deeper things in the Lord's teach-

* Nairne (adapted).

ing than the other disciples could understand, he constantly explained these to his flock. Before or after he died, a disciple, filled with his spirit, set out his teaching in a Gospel, as Mark had done with Peter, and somewhat slowly it won its way abroad.”*

Picture the white-haired presbyter preaching to his congregation. Possibly his own flock did not know his intellectual greatness. Was not his speech simpler than the other doctors? They only knew that no one healed their restlessness and answered their longings and made the Master's teaching so wonderfully meet all their difficulties as he did. For not only had he companied with the Lord in his earthly life in Palestine: he had been living in His presence ever since, and sometimes they would say: “We do not know whether he is telling us words heard long ago, or whether it is what Jesus is teaching him now.”

We should like to have been in that congregation. What did he say? Read, if the class is interested, some passages—*e.g.*, S. John i. 1-12, or x., xiv. 1-6. “Most of the Gospel would be spoken before it was written. When we read it to-day we must remember that many of the arguments about the Sabbath, or about the manna in the wilderness, were living appeals in the name of Jesus Christ to the faith of those who were very familiar with the O.T. We must think of eager faces looking up into the face of the preacher. Imagination fails to realize what new depths in the personality and sayings of Jesus would be sounded in the presence of such audiences. Even after the Gospel was written down it would be read *to*, and very seldom *by*, those for whom it was intended in their meetings for worship.”†

“It has been said that the Evangelist himself probably could not have told us in the case of the longer speeches that this was said in the flesh, and that in the spirit; nor did he care to make such an analysis. Christ was always speaking these things to his listening soul. What did it matter if he had not heard these precise words in Palestine, when

* Nairne (adapted).

† Strachan, p. 6.

they came to him straight out of the heart of the Beloved? We, too, may well withhold our hands from the seamless robe."*

D.—*Before we study the Gospel, perhaps we shall understand it better if we think what it was like to be a Christian* 100 A.D.

1. It meant to belong to a religion which was prohibited by the State. Men hinted darkly that the Christians had sworn allegiance to another King; thus, if occasion obliged them to offer incense to the Emperor, did they not refuse, even if death were the penalty? Christians were not generally searched out, but at any time the flames of persecution might break forth; their lives were never safe.

2. It meant to belong to a little company in the midst of a hostile world, to a religion at which clever folk around scoffed; to the Greeks the Cross was foolishness. "Ephesus was the meeting-place of East and West, famous alike as a seat of religion and of Greek art and learning. It is strange to think that there were even in those days educational endowments for both teachers and scholars, and also at Athens university teaching."† "For a century after S. Paul's death the educated of the ancient world almost invariably excluded from their writings any mention of the new and despicable superstition."‡

3. It meant that the Jews, who after the destruction of Jerusalem were scattered about the Empire and formed one-seventh of its population, pursued them with "venomous malignity." "Thus, only a few years later the Jews of Smyrna broke a great Sabbath in their zeal to build the pyre of Polycarp." . . . There was also apparently a sect of Baptists who exalted the Forerunner at the expense of the Master.

4. They had not themselves had the thrilling experience of being converted from heathenism; they were Christians of the second or third generation, and they had intellectual difficulties. Some said the Lord had not returned in glory as their fathers had expected. "Where is the promise of

* *Ibid.*, p. 4.

† Peake.

‡ Barnes.

His coming?" Others found it hard to believe that the Christ in whom they believed and of whose Presence they were conscious was the same Jesus who had walked in Galilee.

All these troubles of his flock were known to S. John and are reflected in his Gospel.

E.—*The Gospel.*

1. *Prologue.*—"It begins with a prologue which sets the key to the whole." "The air around is permeated with certain ideas taught in Hellenic schools, and caught up in the street and current conversation. He speaks of the Word, 'the Logos,' as men of ordinary education to-day would speak of evolution or the subconscious."* The Logos is equivalent to the revealed truth or self-revelation of God. (To children the old way of explaining that we learn to know people partly by their speech is perhaps as near as we can get.)

It was manifested in a human life: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." Did the Ephesians think of the earthly life as something separate? Did even S. Paul conceive of it as an interlude in glory? "S. John grasps the great unifying thought that to serve, to suffer, and to save is the essence of the Divine glory, the revelation of the God and Father whose nature and whose name is love,"† the death, sacrifice to the utmost, the climax of a life of service. Note the name for the Cross—"lifted up" (xii. 32).

2. *Scene of the Gospel (Judæa and Galilee).*—The story begins with John the Baptist, and emphasis is laid on his words, "I am not the Christ." The scene moves about from Judæa to Galilee, though Galilee is always "home." We learn for the first time that there was a ministry in Judæa before the Galilæan one, and that Andrew and Peter first saw Jesus by the banks of the Jordan. If John were the other disciple (i. 40), we can well imagine that he remembered the very hour Jesus first spoke to him—four o'clock in the afternoon.

* Nairne, p. 180.

† "Foundations," p. 208.

The Judæan ministry also throws light on to the hostility of the religious leaders which appeared so early in the Galilæan ministry (see Mark iii. 4). But as we go on we find we have difficulties if we try to fit S. John into the Synoptic narratives.

3. *The Spiritual Gospel*.—There is a saying of Clement of Alexandria which may help us: "John, having observed that the bodily things had been exhibited in the other Gospels, exhorted by his friends, and inspired by the Holy Ghost, composed a spiritual Gospel." By spiritual is meant probably allegorical, but "symbol" is a more fitting term than "allegory." "Symbol differs from allegory in being actual, not invented; the outward manifestation partakes of the reality it symbolizes, or, in other words, the visible and invisible are essentially connected."

The symbolism is shown in—(a) "Incidents which are selected for their symbolic value; the interest is in ideas, not persons—in the import of the facts rather than the facts themselves. *E.g.*, Nicodemus, after a few verses, disappears out of the narrative. The Greeks ask to see Jesus (xii. 20). S. John never tells us whether they were ushered into His presence; in both cases the emphasis is on the conversations which follow."

(b) The miracles which are called "signs" (ii. 11, R.V.). The children will find there are seven, a symbolic number. Many think they are arranged in a certain order. It depends on the age of the class whether they will be interested in trying to think out the symbolism. "There are symbolic sayings, too, which are not explained—*e.g.*, 'Thou hast kept the good wine until now'; 'It was dark.'"

(c) The conversations with the Jews take up a large space. S. John's indignation with them is great; it sometimes comes out in sentences like this: "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the works of your father ye will do."

The children may be interested to find the seven "I am's"—*e.g.*, "I am the door"; "I am the Good Shepherd."

(d) We shall understand the conversations better (1) if

we remember the Hebrew way of writing. The expression used by the prophets of old was, "The Lord said"; John's formula, "Jesus said." (2) If we change the pronoun from the first person to the third—*e.g.*, "Ye search the Scriptures, and these are they which testify of *Him*"; "Ye know whence *He* comes, and whither *He* goes."

4. *The Coming Again*.—We find the matter of chapters xiv.-xvii. is peculiar to S. John. Doubtless many of the sayings of the Lord may have gone over the heads of the other disciples and found a lodging in the heart of S. John, to whom as the years went on the meaning would become clear; but if we go on picturing the difficulties of the Church in 100 A.D. we feel the significance of these chapters.

Were the Ephesians troubled at the non-return of the Lord, or did they think they had lost by not being among the earliest disciples who were with Jesus in the mansion of the flesh? They should be with Him in the mansion of the spirit, and it was a closer communion. "It is expedient for you that I go away."

S. John lays aside the imagery of S. Paul's letter of the Lord coming from a distant place; there is no trumpet and meeting in the air. S. John thinks of Him as always and everywhere present in the hearts of believers by His spirit; it is a real return by the dispensation of the Holy Ghost.

"Sometimes he speaks of Jesus being manifested—He is always and everywhere present, but as yet His presence is not known by all; He comes and they receive Him not; and by none is He fully realized, for none are as yet like Him. "But we shall be like Him, when we shall see Him as He is." The word "see" is deepened to be more than physical sight."

5. *Life in S. John*.—There is no mention of the Kingdom, which may surprise us until we realize that another word takes its place (*cf.* Mark x. 17, 23)—"eternal life," which occurs seventeen times. The emphasis is not on the adjective; life in S. John's sense is necessarily eternal. What is it? To know God, and this knowing God is a life of progressive experience and illumination—

"a life of ever widening interests and happy self-forgetfulness."

"'Death' in S. John is not the separation of soul and body. That incident does not interrupt or change life. . . . Life begins when we are born from above; death when we turn our eyes quite away from Christ and love" (1 John iii. 14).

"Ideas of reward and punishment hardly ever come in; the penalty of sin is to abide in darkness and death; the reward of goodness is the timeless life of blessedness with God; to see God, and abide in light, life, and love."*

A Legend.

Whether much or little of the Fourth Gospel is taken, the teacher might like to end with this story.

When S. John was old, and too feeble to walk, his disciples used to carry him into the church that he might still teach them; but all he said was, "Little children, love one another," and when they said, "Master, why dost thou always say this?" "It is the Lord's command," was his reply, "and if this be done it is enough."

* Inge, "Cambridge Biblical Essays," p. 287.

APPENDIX

STORIES TO ILLUSTRATE THE IDEAS UNDERLYING THE
LEAGUE OF NATIONS.*For Years I. and II.: "Our Father."*

1. Picture early morning in Capernaum. Silent streets. Door opens. Someone comes out. It is Jesus. He goes out of the town up a hill alone, to talk to His Father and tell Him of all He had been doing.

2. Picture other people rising; stir of life; the disciples meet. "Where is the Master?" They find Him on the hill; perhaps wonder why He stays so long. What can He find to say? They would like to pray as He does, so, later, ask Him: "Lord, teach us to pray." His answer (Luke xi. 1-4). Write on blackboard first two words of the prayer He gave—"Our Father."

3. Picture little Swiss village in winter—e.g., Engleburg (German-speaking Switzerland). Little houses with overhanging roofs; everything covered with snow; snow mountains all round; sun does not rise above them until ten o'clock. People on skis; children going to school muffled up; snowballing, tobogganing, sliding; path dug out of snow to little building by the big church—school. The children run into school as English children do. Then all say together opening prayer. How does it begin? "Unser Vater" (Our Father).

4. Picture village in Italy—e.g., Tivoli, near Rome. Sunshine; blue sky; tall houses in narrow streets; vines hanging from tree to tree; silvery olives; tall cypress trees; shining river like a ribbon; little green lizards darting over warm stones. Dark-eyed children playing on the bridge, girls with bright-coloured handkerchiefs tied

over their black hair. Quaint shops with cakes made of chestnut flour, green balls of steaming spinach, spaghetti. These children go into school; they all say a prayer. How does it begin? "Pater Noster."

All have the same Father; therefore all are brothers and sisters. The teacher might continue the illustration by giving a picture of a village or town in any country; picture postcards or blackboard sketches would help.

Story of Fierce Feathers, Love conquering Hate, from "Quaker Saints."

For Year III. and Onwards.

Aim.

To show how every nation has contributed to the treasures of the world which we all share.

Books.

Tell the story of "Where Love is, there God is," or "The Two Pilgrims." Who gave them to us? Tolstoi—a Russian.

A Fairy Story, by Hans Andersen—a Dane.

"The Tale of Troy," by Homer—a Greek.

"The Merchant of Venice," by Shakespeare—an Englishman.

"The Divine Comedy," by Dante—an Italian.

Old Testament Stories, by The Jews.

Pictures.

Show a picture which attracts the children and tell the story of the artist—*e.g.*:

- I. "S. Francis and the Birds," by Giotto (Italy).

Picture Giotto as a small boy in charge of his father's sheep drawing with a piece of sharpened flint upon a smooth rock everything he could see, his great desire to be a painter.

One day a stranger came riding by, stopped to look

at Giotto's drawing of a sheep. "Would you like to come with me to Florence and learn to be a painter?" Giotto's joy; he went, became a great painter, and helped to fill the world with beauty.

2. "The Sistine Madonna," by Raphael.
3. "The Last Supper," by Leonardo da Vinci.

The children will have no idea of the work which the painting of a great picture involves. Tell the following in the form of a story :

"I remember spending some hours in Venice over volume after volume of pencil drawings and sketches, the work of Leonardo da Vinci. . . . We are all familiar with da Vinci's 'Last Supper,' and with the face of our Lord in the centre. We know the story of how all the other faces were painted in that fresco and the centre place left. What we do not know, what I for my own part did not know until that day in Venice when I handled those records of his unsuspected toil, was that probably for years da Vinci had laboured at that face, obedient to the heavenly vision of his own ceaseless dissatisfaction, until, having with infinite patience laid the wood upon the altar and prepared the sacrifice, God one day sent the flame. Was it not the same great artist who said : 'Thou, O God, sellest all good things at the price of labour' ?"*

4. "The Angelus," by Millet (Belgium).

Music.

Beethoven. Chopin. Mozart. Wagner. Paderewski.

Discoveries by

Madame Curie. Pasteur. Edison. Isaac Newton.
Stephenson. Einstein. Columbus.

Men and Women whose Characters have been an Inspiration to the World—e.g., S. Paul, Francis of Assisi, Joan of Arc, David Livingstone, Abraham Lincoln, Dr. Nansen, Captain Scott, Mazzini, Socrates.

* G. J., *Manchester Guardian*, Free Church Notes.

Fridtjof Nansen.

1. *Explorer*.—Picture Dr. Nansen setting off at twenty-one to the Greenland Sea. By driftwood and wreckage he studied the currents and thought out a plan of driving a ship into a place where she would be frozen into the ice and drifted with it across the Polar region. In 1893 he put his plan to the test, and disappeared for three years. Picture the good ship *Fram* in the Arctic seas; the slow coming of the long, white, pitiless winter, the six months' night of the North; the moonlit Polar nights on a drifting ice-floe. At last the *Fram* came home, and Nansen was honoured by the world for his great feat.

2. *Statesman*.—Picture great excitement in Norway in 1905; a political struggle; Norway and Sweden torn in two; stormy meetings. "Settle it by arms!" cried some. Picture Nansen speaking. "A simple question of right or wrong can be settled without force if we will use our common sense." His suggestion was taken, and the question was settled without fighting. Norway and Sweden separated peaceably. Nansen was appointed first Norwegian Minister in London, and lived there for two years. He then became Professor of Oceanography at the University of Christiania.

3. *Philanthropist*.—(1) His work in rescuing the last legion of Europe. Half a million of Austrian, Hungarian, and Turkish prisoners who were left in captivity after the war.

(2) His work as High Commissioner of the International Famine Relief Fund. Picture him collecting the money in England, America, and other countries; the ships that took the food; the trains arriving in Russia; the Friends and others giving it to the people.

N.B.—The teacher can add to this list indefinitely.

Story of the "Christ of the Andes," by Gilbert Murray.*

* Leaflet published by League of Nations Union; also "Lessons on League of Nations" (S.S. Institute).

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